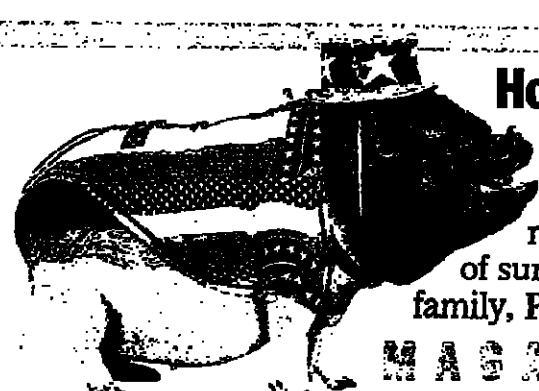




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Blood samples to be analysed again

Thousands face anxious wait for Aids check

By RUSSELL JENKINS, ADAM FRESCO AND RICHARD THOMSON

TENS of thousands of people across Europe are facing an anxious wait to learn if they are at risk of Aids after a widely used HIV test was found to be flawed.

Up to 60,000 blood samples taken in Britain since last September may have to be analysed again, and further checks are also being made in Germany, France, Holland, Italy and Scandinavia. In Germany, health officials have ordered spot checks at bloodbanks as the test was used to screen blood donors.

About two million of the testing kits were sold before Abbott Laboratories of Chicago withdrew them from the market last month after scientists in Portsmouth and Sweden found that they were producing false negative results. The test — "IMx HIV-1/HIV 3rd Generation Plus" — has not been licensed in America.

Yesterday, as hospitals began rechecking samples, hundreds of people who had been told that they were HIV negative, bombarded Aids charity helplines, which told them to contact the clinics that carried out their tests when they reopened on Tuesday. The charities meanwhile complained that they had been left in the dark by the Health Department and then forced to cope with the ensuing panic over a holiday weekend.

The Abbott kit is only one of several methods of testing for HIV and it is believed to have been used on about 5,000 people and only a tiny percentage is likely to be HIV positive. But since patients are not told which test they are using, many thousands more samples will have to be checked.

In Germany, the problem is most

acute because 650,000 of the kits have been sold there and the test was used to screen blood donors. It is also commonly used in Denmark, Sweden and Holland, where it is understood that 50,000 samples will have to be re-analysed. The Italian health ministry has ordered the seizure of tests from 500 centres where it has been available since October.

Flaws in the Abbott kit were first noticed in Sweden when an industrial dispute led to double testing of some samples, which then produced conflicting results. And in Portsmouth, scientists found a patient who definitely had Aids was testing negative.

The Public Health Laboratory Service said: "We found in our Portsmouth lab a result that did not fit. It was looked at by the people there and then by others at the central laboratory in London. It was a good team effort. All the results were then sent to the company."

The fault was identified more than a month ago and Abbott's German laboratories notified last week. The product was withdrawn on March 25 and the company informed the Health Department last Friday. At least nine false negatives have now been confirmed: three in Britain, four in Germany and two in France.

The test produces the false reading when the blood contains especially high levels of the human immunodeficiency virus that causes Aids. Infected blood with more common levels of HIV is believed to produce accurate readings. Dr. Graham Winyard, the Deputy Chief Medical Officer, said yesterday: "The test involved is

only one of a number used by the NHS and the circumstances in which it gives this false negative are very unusual."

The Health Department also emphasised that the system had not been used for blood donations and insisted that there was no reason to doubt the result of any test before last September or the vast majority of HIV tests carried out since then.

But Nicholas Partridge of the Terence Higgins Trust Aids charity said: "The cost is going to be in personal distress. Clearly a lot of people go for testing as a couple to reassure themselves and then stop using condoms. 'If one of these people has the virus, there is a possibility that they will unknowingly infect their loved one. That is the real human tragedy that could unfold."

Susie Parsons, of the London Lighthouse, criticised the Health Department for failing to make any announcement, even though it had known of the problem for some days. "We have been trying to get through all morning, but their lines have been blocked," she said.

Harriet Harman, the Shadow Health Secretary, also attacked the department, saying: "It is unfortunate that it did not notify people as soon as they got the information rather than wait for a public holiday."

But Dr Winyard said: "We were planning to make the situation public next week when more detailed arrangements, including the arrangements which local clinics will need to have, could all have been put into place."

Abbott test, page 2



The Cambridge crew on their last practice run yesterday before today's Boat Race

Helmets off for fans of Bertie Wooster

By OLIVER AUGUST

Police lining the Thames today for this year's Boat Race will be wearing peaked caps for the first time to discourage exuberant on-lookers from following the example of Bertie Wooster and snatching helmets for a lark.

After a growing number of Drones Club-style pranks over recent years which have seen headgear floating away down the river, officers demanded a change. They said their dignity was in jeopardy.

A spokesman for Wandsworth police, which will have 250 officers on duty along the river, said: "Special arrangements have been made. The American-style flat caps that replaced the traditional bobbies' helmets are much more difficult to knock off."

PC Tim Maddox said: "Drunken toils come from behind you when it is very crowded after the race and one of them knocks the helmet off. Someone else then picks it up and runs away with it."

The tradition was immortalised in P.G. Wodehouse's *Carry on, Jeeves*. Egged on by Bertie Wooster, his friend Oliver Sipperley, editor of the *Majfair Gazette*, beats up a police officer to get his helmet. He is promptly sentenced to "thirty days in the Second Division without the option of a fine."

Admitting his complicity, Wooster says: "It was I who, in a moment of mistaken kindness, wishing only to cheer him up and give him something to occupy his mind, recommended him to pinch that policeman's helmet."

The incident, recalled again in later Wooster books, has inspired an outing to the Boat Race by the Wodehouse Society. "No helmet is safe," Richard Morris, the society's chairman said. "We shall be taking the liberty of relieving a few of the gentlemen in blue of their prized headgear."

The society's contingent will gather at a pub near Hammer-smith Bridge from where they will co-ordinate their raids.

David Miller and Race preview, page 44

Cunard abandons crash ship cruise

By ANDREW PIERCE

BRITISH passengers on a Cunard world cruise were flying home today after their luxury liner struck the coral reef and was towed into an Egyptian port.

The *Royal Viking Sun* is anchored at Sharm el Sheikh, on the Red Sea. The 560 passengers, including 54 Britons, were taken on shore by catamaran. No one was injured.

Cunard has admitted that no local pilot was on board the vessel when the accident happened at 9.15pm on Thursday in the Tiran Straits.

Bill Spears, the director of public relations, said: "It was not necessary. The waterway was not deemed tricky

enough. It is Cunard policy and the law to have experienced crew on the bridge. We have launched an inquiry to find out what went wrong."

Once the scale of the damage was known — two engine rooms were flooded — Cunard called off the 116-day cruise of 36 ports which began on January 6 and was due to end on April 29 in Florida.

Passengers were assembled on deck wearing life-jackets. They watched the lifeboats swing out over the water, but were brought back on board after an hour when the vessel's list was stabilised.

One hundred and twenty passengers on the ship had been aboard Cunard's *MV Sagaford* which ran aground off the Philippines in February. They were completing their round-the-world voyage on the *Royal Viking Sun*.

Compensation bill, page 7

Woolwich chief tells of sadness

Peter Robinson, the ousted Woolwich Building Society chief executive, has spoken out about his dismissal, saying that he believes himself to be the victim of a concerted smear campaign. He says that he was surprised and saddened by events after what he described as an unblemished 33-year career with the society. Page 2

Hendrix suicide

Monika Danneman, who pledged her life to the memory of Jimi Hendrix, has killed herself 48 hours after losing a High Court case brought by another of the guitarist's former lovers. She was found in a flame-filled car. Page 3

House-hunt time

Estate agents are expecting the holiday weekend to be their busiest since the housing market recession began seven years ago. Some experts are predicting that house prices will rise by 5 per cent this year. Page 6

NUT's moderates fail to stop Shephard protest

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

SECURITY was tightened at the National Union of Teachers' conference yesterday after protesters tried in vain to stop Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, from speaking to delegates in Cardiff today.

She will be the first minister to address the NUT since 1980, and the protests threaten to destroy attempts by moderates to rid the union of its militant image. They fear a repetition of last year's disorder when David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary, arrived to address a fringe meeting. He will address this year's conference tomorrow and Don Foster, the Liberal Democrats' education spokesman, will do so on Monday.

Fran Crowhurst, the Lewisham teacher, seen by millions on television yelling slogans at Mr Blunkett, is again among those represent-

ing her branch. Yesterday members of the Socialist Workers Party, supporters of which led that disturbance, argued for a walkout.

The left-wingers, who were meeting last night to discuss tactics, have targeted Mrs Shephard this year to



Regan: wants to restrict protest to a ticking off

demonstrate against government policies. The Secretary of State will be introduced by Carole Regan, the union's president and a member of the leading left-wing grouping.

A teacher in Tower Hamlets, east London, she promised the conference that she would give Mrs Shephard a public "ticking off" but appealed to militants not to disrupt the speech, saying she favoured a silent protest.

Doug McAvoy, NUT general secretary, said Mrs Shephard could not expect a "tumultuous welcome" because the union opposed many government policies. He added: "I hope she will be received properly and certainly there will be no repeat of the situation when David Blunkett arrived last year."

Delegates will not be allowed to question her after the 20-minute speech.

Oh, to be in-sulated, now that April's here

By NIGEL HAWKES

SPRING is having a shocking start this year. It has been dull; it has been cold; daffodils have been reluctant to put in an appearance. But it is the exceptionally dry air that has been truly shocking.

On Thursday, the relative humidity of air in London fell

to 16 per cent, the second-lowest figure recorded, with quite painful results. Dry air allows static electricity to build up on the body and clothing, causing a brief shock when it is discharged by touching a door handle or filing cabinet.

The air in Britain is seldom dry enough for this to be a big problem, but this week a

combination of dry air flowing in from the Continent and clear skies has sent humidity levels plunging and by Thursday afternoon, they were close to the record 11 per cent reached in March 1965. "It was an exceptionally good day for drying washing," the London Weather Centre said. Static electricity can be a

serious hazard, causing mysterious fires and explosions, and even the slight shocks it causes can prove more than a minor irritation. Fraserburgh Academy in Scotland was closed by the headmaster when pupils complained of electric shocks from light switches last year. All 1,300 pupils and 100 staff were

moved out, but the shocks continued after the power was turned off. The culprit was static caused by low humidity. Yesterday, however, humidity in London had returned to 35 per cent, and with cloud and rain expected, it is unlikely to dip again soon.

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Celtic v Rangers

HOW TO BE A GREAT
GRANDMOTHER

by Elizabeth Longford



PLUS: MATTHEW PARRIS,
COLUMNIST OF THE YEAR

HIV test was designed to miss no cases

THE Aids virus test that produced false results was introduced by the American company Abbott last year under the name IMx HIV-1/HIV-2 3rd Generation. It is the latest version of a test that has proved successful since it was first manufactured more than ten years ago.

Like other HIV tests, it works by detecting the presence in the blood of antibodies to HIV, which causes Aids. The presence of such antibodies means the immune system has responded to HIV-infection by mounting an attack.

The technique involved is called immunoassay and exploits the fact that, as part of the process of destroying it, the

■ While thousands of people across Europe wait to find if they are at risk of contracting Aids, Nigel Hawkes explains how the HIV test they took went wrong

antibody binds to HIV. The test kits contain a disabled version of HIV. When a sample of blood is added, any antibodies present bind to it. The presence of virus-antibody compounds can be detected by adding chemicals and watching for a colour change.

Tests like these, which cost about £1 each, are designed to be so sensitive that they miss no cases. If they wrongly

identify as positive samples that are not, it is less important because all positive results are checked using a more sensitive test before the patient is told.

False negatives are more serious, giving those tested an unjustified sense of security and — if used for blood donations — allowing HIV infection to spread to blood recipients. That does not arise in Britain because the Abbott

test was not used by the Blood Transfusion Service.

It is not known how many erroneous results have been produced but the number could be very small. According to Erik Nordenfält, head of the Swedish Infectious Diseases Prevention Unit, the test falls when the amounts of virus in the body are high.

"What is wrong with the test is that it can mistakenly show negative when there are large concentrations of HIV antibodies in the blood," he said. "The test can show the blood is free from HIV if a person has been infected for a long time."

Abbott, which says it has been notified of four false results from 2.5 million tests,

says it does not know what went wrong with the kits and it is investigating. However it is unrealistic to expect such tests to be completely accurate.

A much greater problem with all antibody tests is that they can test positive only if antibodies are already circulating, and for the first few weeks after infection that is not the case. There is therefore a period, estimated at 11 to 22 days, when no antibodies can be detected but the infection is present. To close this "window" a new test is to be introduced into the US to test donated blood for the presence of HIV itself, not the antibodies against it.

This will be enormously

expensive — as much as \$10 million for every contaminated sample it detects. There are no plans to introduce such antigen testing in Britain, which anyway has a much lower level of HIV infection than the US.

There are at least four HIV-antibody test kits available from manufacturers. In the 1980s the Public Health Laboratory Service tested rival kits from the US companies Abbott, Liton, and Electro-nucleonics (marketed by the Dutch company Organon) as well as from the British company Wellcome (now part of Glaxo).

Thousands wait, page 1

Woolwich boss
hits back at
'smear stories'

By ROBERT MILLER

PETER ROBINSON, the ousted chief executive of the Woolwich, hit back yesterday at what he said was a concerted smear campaign against him.

He said he had been advised by his solicitors not to mount a point-by-point rebuttal of specific allegations over abuses concerning expenses and other building society perks. The allegations have included use of building society gardeners, electricians and decorators for work on his home in Brasted, Kent, possibly over a longer period than the initial three months alluded to by the society in its official announcement of his departure.

Mr Robinson said yesterday: "I am surprised and a good deal saddened at what I can only see is a concerted smear campaign. My reaction to all this is that I have a 33-year unblemished record of service with the Woolwich culminating in this appointment. I was the same person at the start of my appointment as I was three months later, so what has happened over the three months?"

He said he had received a call from a friend in the middle of his holiday in the Caribbean to warn him that something

was afoot. On his return to Britain Mr Robinson's usual driver handed him a letter summoning him to a meeting with senior society executives later the same day.

At the meeting Mr Robinson was told that there had been an "irreparable breakdown of confidence" in him. Mr Robinson said that he would rebut all the allegations against him. He said that he had been surprised by the strength of media interest in his departure and that his 39-year-old mother had been harassed by reporters.

Mr Robinson said that he could not imagine what had led to the build up of boardroom opposition against him. He said that he could only speculate that he had been given "some of the more difficult jobs to do" such as reorganising and in some cases closing down businesses within the Woolwich.

He suggested that perhaps there was "a good deal of stored up resentment" against him. Mr Robinson is still living away from his mock-tudor Kent home where the family has lived since 1983. It has a gymnasium built in a hacienda style with mirrored walls, a swimming pool and a tennis court.



Robinson: denies any wrongdoing

Labour jobs plan
for young blacks

By JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR is to target young black unemployed people with job creation schemes as part of a programme to curb racial tension in inner cities. Local authorities and private firms will be able to bid for money specifically for such schemes.

The proposals are being drawn up by Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, after growing concern about the high level of black unemployment in cities which is often double that for whites.

Last year, the level of unemployment in inner London boroughs was 15.9 per cent. Unemployment among white people was 12.5 per cent and 29.3 per cent for black people. Similar differences were found in the East Midlands

where 7.1 per cent of whites were jobless compared to 17.2 per cent of blacks and Asians.

The money would be made available through the existing Single Regeneration Budget under which councils can bid for cash for projects. Party sources said money earmarked for jobless blacks would be found from existing resources with schemes handled jointly by the Department of Environment, the Department of Education and Employment and Home Office.

Labour last night denied it was planning to impose Alan Howarth, the former Conservative MP, on the Yorkshire mining constituency of Wentworth against strong local opposition.

Belgium lifts ban
on British calves

FROM JAMES LANDALE IN BRUSSELS AND OLIVER AUGUST

THERE was welcome news for beef farmers last night when Belgium lifted a ban on the sale of 27,000 British-born veal calves.

Karel Pinxten, the Agriculture Minister, told farmers and veal producers in Brussels that the calves, sold to Belgium earlier this year to be fattened up, were safe to eat and could be sold internally.

He said: "The British calves in Belgium are all under six months old so they were never fed with meal made from animals."

In Britain, beef sales and prices have returned to normal levels, supermarkets abandoning cut-price offers after an upsurge in demand.

A spokesman for Asda said:

"Consumer confidence has returned. We are taking the same amount of money now as at this time last year."

Michael Bates at Morrison's said: "Sales have picked up again and we feel encouraged by the response of our customers."

The return of consumer confidence caught some beef retailers unawares. "It is surprising how quickly people forget. Sales are back to normal," a meat salesman at Harrods said.

In France, a case of CJD comparable to those that sparked the crisis in Britain has been reported, a senior health official said. It involved a 29-year-old man in Lyon who died in January.

Bumper-to-bumper
holiday weekend

Thousands of motorists hoping to take advantage of the spring sunshine spent most of yesterday roasting in their cars. Traffic slowed to a crawl on roads out of cities and towards coastal resorts.

An RAC spokeswoman said: "The major problem areas are the M4 approaching the Severn Bridge towards Wales, the M5 to the South West, the A30 in Devon and routes to northern resorts. Traffic was also at a virtual standstill on the M40, M1 and M4 leaving London."

Two children and their father were killed in a crash near Horsham, West Sussex, on a main holiday route to the coast, when a van veered across the road and hit their car.

Clarke's hopes for No 10

Kenneth Clarke has admitted that he retains ambitions to become Prime Minister. The Chancellor had infuriated the Tory Right by resisting pressure to agree to a referendum on a single currency, and has rivals on the Centre-Left. But when asked by *The Birmingham Post* if he had given up hopes of the job, he said: "I have not given up hope. All politicians aspire to as senior an office as they can."

Girl survives live rail

Twelve-year-old Jacquelynne Muft, right, survived a fall down an embankment on to a 940-volt live rail when she chased her puppy across a railway line in Portsmouth. She was thrown 10ft into the air but escaped with minor burns, bruises and singed hair. Speaking from her hospital bed in Portsmouth Jacquelynne, from Gosport, Hampshire, said: "I wondered if I was ever going to land."



Soldiers to appeal

The three soldiers jailed for life in Cyprus for killing a Danish tour guide are to appeal against their convictions and sentences. Lawyers for Alan Ford, 27, Justin Fowler, 28, and Jeffrey Pernel, 24, who were found guilty of conspiracy to rape, abduction and manslaughter, claim the evidence was flawed and the sentences were too harsh.

Victory over cancer

Karen Farnaby, right, of Darlington, who won the Zetland Hunt steeplechase in North Yorkshire on her 12-year-old horse Vinny, had completed a series of operations for non-Hodgkins lymphoma only three weeks earlier. Miss Farnaby, 25, said of the race: "It was gruelling and only the horse was keeping me going at the end. But now I intend to hold on to this cup and win again next year."



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NATIONAL SAVINGS

Victim of a legend, 26 years on Hendrix's sad love kills herself after losing court case

By RICHARD DUCE

A GIRLFRIEND who pledged her life to the memory of Jimi Hendrix killed herself yesterday, only 48 hours after losing a costly High Court case with another ex-lover of the rock guitarist. Monika Danneman was found dead in her fume-filled Mercedes at her thatched cottage in Seaford, East Sussex, which she had turned into a shrine to the star.

Hendrix was living with Miss Danneman in London when he died in 1970, and in a recent interview she said: "Jimi gave me a heavy burden. I had to promise that if he died, I'd spread his message. It is a lonely life. But if I'd not met Jimi, my life would have been very ordinary."

She had been involved in a long controversy over the circumstances of Hendrix's death and his relationship with the other woman, Kathy Etchingham. On Wednesday, Miss Danneman, 50, an artist, was held to be in contempt for breaching an injunction not to repeat allegations that Miss Etchingham, 49, was an "inveterate liar" about her life with Hendrix. She was liable for £30,000 costs.

Last night Miss Etchingham said at her home near Farnham, Hampshire: "I



Etchingham said she had to make a stand

am greatly saddened that it should have to end like this. There was never any personal ill-will as far as I was concerned. But certain things happened over the last five years over which I had to take a legal stand. I feel very sorry for her family over this dreadful news."

In the past Miss Etchingham, who inspired the Hendrix song *Foxy Lady*, had questioned whether Miss Danneman could have done more to save Hendrix before he choked to death on his own vomit in September 1970, aged 27. Continued speculation

about the circumstances of the death led Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney General, to reopen the file in 1994 and consider whether he died, as the official version said, in an ambulance on his way to hospital, or lain dead in Miss Danneman's Notting Hill flat for hours before help was summoned. The investigation cleared her of suggestions that she delayed calling for help.

The two women cut contrasting figures in the High Court this week. Miss Etchingham, now married to a doctor, appeared to be in control. Miss Danneman, an East German-born former ice-skater, appeared sad and isolated as she scribbled endless notes for her lawyers.

She continued to paint pictures of Hendrix up until her death. The court was told that she had been forced to sell some of her paintings to support herself, and was also in ill-health. In her recent interview, she said: "I never got out and socialise. I'm just working on my art."

Miss Danneman had earlier lost a libel action and was ordered to pay £1,000 damages and costs after alleging that Miss Etchingham "would cheat and lie for money" and stole the guitarist's belongings from his flat while he was



Danneman endured a lonely life, but promised to spread Hendrix's message

away on tour. The claims resurfaced in 1995 when Miss Danneman published *The Inner World of Jimi Hendrix*, to coincide with the anniversary of his death. Holding her in contempt on Wednesday, Mr Justice French said no public interest would be served by jailing her or imposing a

financial penalty. Police were called to her home at 9.40am yesterday after her mother Rosemarie raised the alarm. At the cottage, a male relative said: "She was very upset by the court case this week. She did not leave a note. Nobody seems to know what happened."

A neighbour said: "I am really shocked to hear what has happened. I saw her yesterday. She was doing the gardening."

A police spokesman said: "It is my understanding that the victim was overcome by fumes. We are treating it as a suicide."

Irish policeman reprieved after drunken row with minister

By NICHOLAS WATT, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

AN AGGRIEVED Irish policeman, ordered home from United Nations peacekeeping duties in Cyprus after complaining to his visiting Defence Minister about police pay, exacted his revenge yesterday.

A lawyer acting for Police Officer Michael Fitzpatrick claimed in the High Court in Dublin that Sean Barrett, the minister, was drunk during their heated exchange. At an unprecedented Good Friday hearing Mr Fitzpatrick, 31, was awarded an injunction restraining the police from sending him home after Mr Barrett's visit to the Irish peacekeepers in Cyprus last month.

As Mr Barrett mingled with officers at the UN Hibernian Club in Nicosia, Mr Fitzpatrick tackled him about allowances paid to policemen serving overseas. During their argument he told Mr Barrett, a leading member of the governing Fine Gael party, that the problem would be sorted out when the Opposition, Fianna Fail, returned to power.

Police Officer John Scanlon, who witnessed the fracas, gave a graphic account of the exchange. In a statement read out to the court by Pat O'Donnell, counsel for Mr Fitzpatrick, he said that both

his colleague and the minister were drunk.

"The minister... became very irate and said PO Fitzpatrick was a disgrace. Both PO Fitzpatrick and the minister had consumed a lot of alcohol and both were drunk. The minister was shaking and seemed to be very upset. He then said 'PO Fitzpatrick would go no further.'"

Mr Fitzpatrick was ordered to leave the room by army officers. As he left he apologised to the minister. His superiors, who were horrified by his impertinence, also apologised to the minister the next day.

After an investigation it was decided that Mr Fitzpatrick would be sent home. He was due to return today.

However, Mr Justice Carney gave him leave to apply to the court to challenge the decision. The judge said he was satisfied that a strong prima facie case had been made that the punishment was disproportionate.

Mr Barrett insisted on his return to Ireland that he was not involved in the decision to send Mr Fitzpatrick home. "I accepted the apology, shook hands and was happy to forget about it," he said. He did not want to intervene because the matter was an internal one for the police.

Sir Denis tells of love for a flying lady

By ANDREW PIERCE

SIR DENIS THATCHER has disclosed one of his greatest joys at leaving 10 Downing Street. He was allowed to buy a second Rolls-Royce.

The consort of the former Prime Minister, who is the subject of a biography by his daughter, Carol, published next week, was forced to give up his beloved Rolls soon after they moved into "Ten". He had no choice. His wife issued the order.

In a rare interview, Sir Denis has disclosed to *The Times*: "I had one before we moved into Ten. But when we got there Margaret said: 'It is a bit much. Get rid of it. It's not good for the image.'"

Reluctantly, Sir Denis acquiesced. He bought a run-around Ford, which sat uncomfortably next to the Prime Minister's chauffeur-driven Daimler during the Downing Street years. "It was British of course," said Sir Denis. "Reliable as clockwork."

Carol's biography, *Below the Parapet*, published by HarperCollins, claims that her father was deliberately projected as a gin-and-tonic swilling jester to deflect attention from his real persona: as a highly successful multi-



Sir Denis: falling sight stopped him driving

millionaire businessman. But Sir Denis was only biding his time.

"When we left Ten I said, 'Get me another Rolls.' Lady Thatcher never demurred this time. Asked whether being reunited with a Rolls was one of the few virtues of leaving Downing Street, Sir Denis replied: 'Who said one of the few?'"

The pleasure was short-lived. Sir Denis, 80, who has already been forced to abandon his first love, golf, because of arthritis and back pains, has now had to give up a Rolls for the second time. For good. "Damned eyesight. It's failing. But don't say I am going blind," he said.

He has since sold the car. His failing sight has also disrupted another of his pastimes. "If I go to an England Test match now I can't see the ball. Mind you, nor can the English batsmen."

Car 96, page 10

Yachting couple freed in Eritrea

By STEPHEN FARRELL

A BRITISH couple arrested by the Eritrean navy when their yacht strayed into a restricted zone were freed yesterday after 18 days' house arrest.

Peter Billing, 64, and his wife, Shirley, 61, were released from an hotel in the capital, Asmara. They were taken from their 35ft ketch *Clypeus* at gunpoint on March 19, the thirteenth anniversary of the start of their round-the-world voyage.

Their son Noel, 37, from Wokingham, Berkshire, was told of their release in a telephone call from Dr Rod Hicks, the honorary consul. "He said, 'The good news is they have just been released. They are now trying to get back to the boat, but it will take a few days. However they are free people.'"

Peter Billing, speaking later from Dr Hicks's home in Asmara, said he felt a sense of "tremendous relief" at being released. "We have no complaint against any Eritrean. They have been more than polite at all times and the delay was merely due to the wheels of diplomacy turning."

The couple will fly to the coast on Tuesday. A French couple detained with them remained under house arrest last night.



Simon Tomlinson, and the blackened shell of Down Farm yesterday

Georgian home of Prince's polo friends gutted by fire

By RICHARD DUCE

POLO-PLAYING friends and neighbours of the Prince of Wales cut short their skiing holiday yesterday after learning that their Georgian home had been destroyed by fire.

Captain Simon Tomlinson, 52, and his wife Claire, 50, Britain's leading woman polo player, were told yesterday about the fire at Down Farm, near the Prince's Highgrove estate at Tetbury, Gloucestershire, while they were in Austria with the youngest of their three children, Mark, 13. Down Farm is home to the recently revived Beaufort Polo Club.

Nine fire crews from six towns fought for more than

four hours early yesterday to bring the fire under control after it was reported by a passing motorist. Flames up to 50ft could be seen seven miles away. Valuable paintings and furniture were destroyed at the house, which was valued at £750,000.

Greg French, a spokesman for the Tomlinson's estate, said: "The place is in a real mess. Many neighbours have been very helpful and supportive. They have spent the day helping to remove stuff and sort things out. It has been a tremendous effort, but it is going to take some time before we can evaluate the full extent of the fire."

Station Officer Simon McMillan, of Gloucestershire

Fire Service, said: "When we arrived, the house was already well alight. The fire had engulfed the roof and flames could be seen from as far away as Nailsworth. Officers with breathing apparatus were sent into the house but had to be withdrawn soon afterwards for their own safety because of the intensity of the fire and severe structural damage."

Firemen and farm staff were on standby to evacuate polo ponies from adjoining stables, but the fire was contained to the main house.

Inspector David Brooks said: "We sent officers to the scene to carry out tests to establish the cause, but at this stage it looks like nothing more than an accident."

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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

Elvis fans and pigeon fanciers bereft as W H Smith spring-clean sweeps out niche titles

Not only is the King dead: now his shelf life is finished too

BY ANDREW PIERCE

HUNDREDS of obscure magazines, bought by devotees of everything from pigeons to Elvis Presley in his prime, are facing extinction after being swept from High Street shelves.

W H Smith is dropping 350 specialist publications, the sales of some of which have not wavered in decades, to make more room on its shelves for mass-circulation magazines. Left-wing publications such as *Red Pepper* and *Tribune* and the more specialised *Dr Who Poster Magazine*, *Elvis Monthly*, the Pamela Anderson fanzine and *Epicurean Life*, are all threatened by the move.

Tribune, one of the few unresurrected voices of the Left, is the most high profile victim of the axe. Salt has been rubbed in the wound for the chief critic of any future Labour Government by the fact that W H Smith is still selling the latest edition of *Mein Kampf*, Hitler's masterpiece for the Third Reich.

Mark Seddon, the *Tribune* editor, who has enlisted 60 Labour MPs for his campaign to adapt European legislation, said: "There is no room for us but plenty of space in 70 W H Smith branches for Hitler. It says everything."

"We will have to rely more heavily on subscriptions. But



The fancier's favourite: *Racing Pigeon Pictorial*

it would be a tragedy if the long-established voice of the Left was snuffed out because of retail censorship."

Word had failed to reach Rick Osman, the editor of *Racing Pigeon Pictorial*, that his 25-year-old publication was included. "Maybe they should have sent message by racing pigeon," said Mr Osman, whose great-grandfather founded *Racing Pigeon Weekly* in 1898. The £1.50 monthly has a circulation of 7,500.

Mr Osman, 45, whose 32 pigeons share a loft with his children's two bicycles, said: "We had a long and glorious association with the shelves of W H Smith but we will survive. We have moved on from the cloth cap and Andy Capp

readership." Indeed, last year the world of pigeon fancying was at the centre of an illicit drug-taking scandal, a habit more associated with the more glamorous worlds of football and athletics. *Racing Pigeon Pictorial* was at the fore of the campaign to keep British pigeons drug-free. "It was a very big story," said Mr Osman.

Elvis Presley fans, already in permanent mourning over the death of their hero, are dismayed by the ban on *Elvis Monthly*. They fear the charms of the king of rock and roll will be denied to a new generation. Alan Armes, 42, deputy editor of *Elvis Monthly*, said: "We have been sold in W H Smith for 35 years. We were planning a bumper sales drive to mark the 20th anniversary next year of the death of the King."

Despite Elvis's long period of inactivity, the magazine still runs to at least 50 pages each month. The cover always boasts a photograph of Elvis in his prime. "He was never fat or bloated. That was media hype," said Mr Armes, who runs the publication from a house in Leicester.

"We never report latest sightings, or dress up as Elvis. That is frivolous. We run regular pilgrimages to Graceland, where we can feel his presence. The legend of Elvis lives. So will we, and longer than Cliff Richard." He



Alan Armes in his office at *Elvis Monthly*. "Genuine fans will still buy it. It's what Elvis would have wanted"

rejected the notion that his readers were living in the past. "Elvis lives on in our lives. But we are realistic. We love Elvis but we do not think we are Elvis. We know he is dead. I am sure genuine fans will keep buying our magazine. It's what he would want."

The Yorkshire-based *Top Hats & Veils* has already been suspended. The circulation of

the glossy, 48-page wedding quarterly was 7,000 and rising. Lynn Stocks, the sales supervisor, said: "All the other wedding publications are Home Counties and south-east-based. It may not sound glamorous but we do have big weddings in Humberside."

Time may also be running out for *International Wristwatch*, whose circulation

reached 20,000 during the six years it has been in existence. The publication is a bible for watch collectors. Michael Balfour, contributing editor, who owns 29 watches, said: "Some people say minority interest but we say niche market. We have a sister title in Chinese."

Other publications affected by the ban include the Methodist Recorder, Noddy Spe-

cial, Country Music Round-up, Taekwondo & Korean Combat Arts and Thomas the Tank Engine Collected Editions. A spokeswoman for W H Smith said: "Our customers are looking for more mainstream products. Most of the products can still be ordered through us."

Leading article, page 19

Climber is killed by avalanche

An experienced climber who fell 1,000ft to his death in an avalanche in Scotland was named yesterday as Kevin Wilson, 41. Mr Wilson, from Acomb, York, was tackling the 3,708ft Creag Meagaidh in the Grampian Mountains, despite warnings of dangerous conditions.

He is the third climber to die in Scotland this week, and the seventh this year.

Body in canal

Emergency services recovered a man's body from a canal yesterday after it was spotted floating in the water by a passer-by at Brierley Hill, West Midlands. Detectives are treating the death as suspicious.

Hue and fly

The RSPCA has condemned cruelty to pigeons after pink, yellow and green birds appeared in central London. It is thought that they have been dipped in vegetable dye as a prank. The dye could last for up to a year.

Children safe

Two missing children have been found safe in Ireland with their mother. Stephen Divers appealed to his partner, Regina Bough, 24, to return Debbie, 3, and Charles, 5, who were taken from his London home.

Leasing takes off

No 32 (The Royal) Squadron, whose duties include carrying the Royal Family, has leased two French-made Squirrel helicopters. It is the first time the RAF has leased rather than bought aircraft.

'Leniency' appeal

The prosecution is seeking to appeal over the "lenient" sentences for three middle-class Cardiff youths given up to two years' custody for an attack after which a victim died of natural causes.

Railway heaven

Burials for railway buffs could include wakes in a dining car and a final journey to a trackside cemetery, under a planning application by the Midland Railway Trust, at Ripley, Derbyshire.

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Spot goes to Hollywood in his most spectacular on-screen extravaganza to date! In-store Price £44.99.

Mystery of deserted yacht

BY A STAFF REPORTER

AN AIRLINE pilot, whose marriage recently collapsed, is missing after his deserted yacht was found aground on mudflats near Southampton with the engines still running.

Norman Harriss set sail in the Solent on Thursday night. When his £30,000 vessel *Jetstream Flyer* was recovered his spectacles and a half-drunk cup of tea were found but there was no sign of the inflatable dinghy. Mr Har-

ris, 45, of Tadworth, Surrey, who worked for British Airways, moored the 33ft yacht at Gosport boatyard where he had told workers his second marriage was over. Lifeboats and inshore rescue vessels joined the search yesterday.

Mr Harriss had telephoned his son Duncan to say he intended sailing until yesterday when he planned to moor at Lynton, Hampshire. Hampshire police said: "There have been no sightings of either the sailor or his

dinghy. We are investigating two theories: that he has gone somewhere in his dinghy or he fell overboard."

Colin Olden, of the Hamble rescue lifeboat, said: "Because the engine was still ticking over and a pair of glasses were found on the deck it was clear that someone had only very recently been on board."

Solent coastguard said: "The search is being run down, almost terminated. It is now being treated as a missing person inquiry."

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The Essex clan who cleaned up on the Côte d'Azure



In the first of an occasional series on Britons in France, Bill Frost meets a family building a new life from the ruins of failure in Basildon

HIGH on a sun-dappled hillside near Grasse, Simon Stevens gloats over the breathtaking view from his balcony, predicts that soon the pool will be warm enough for a swim and laughs like a drain when asked if he misses Essex.

His extended clan — four generations of the same family from Basildon — all find the question amusing too. In the early spring heat of his perfect Côte d'Azur garden, where the two family dogs snooze in the heat, he said: "Basildon could disappear tomorrow. I couldn't care less — depressing old place, ghost town. It cost me my livelihood, my peace of mind and almost my health — you can keep Essex as far as this family is concerned."

His bitterness is understandable. Mr Stevens, huge and bullet-headed with the physique of an ox, but the temperament of a lamb, had a thriving classic car repair business which went under four years ago. He allowed

too much credit to customers who were already in financial difficulties with the collapse of the specialist market. His suppliers were neither as patient nor as generous — bankruptcy, depression and chronic angina followed.

Driven by desperation, the Stevens family left Essex for the South of France in a Ford Transit with £1,000 and no idea how they were to survive. They had enjoyed a holiday at a campsite near Antibes just before the business collapsed and believed that, "with a will", there was work "for those ready to get off their bums and find it".

Mr Stevens, 44, remembers the journey through France as "a nightmare of hunger, doubt and anxiety". So does his wife, Christine. She said: "There were three generations — us, our two sons, their wives, our parents and a grandchild on the way. It was a terrible worry going back to Antibes but what did Basildon have to offer? Essex gave us no hope at all and I am a firm believer in fate — this was a place where we had been happy before... why not work there in the sunshine among people we liked?"

Rather than return to Basildon, the Stevens family, "down to the last few quid", were willing to do anything, and they did. "In the early days we cleaned lavatories, felled trees and cleared up the rubbish so no one else would touch. Because of my physique, I was able to do some minding too, acting as a bodyguard," said Mr Stevens. In his spare time, he taught himself French, which he now speaks well, albeit with an Essex accent.

The whole family went to work with a vengeance. Mrs Stevens said: "The boys worked around the clock and so did we girls — babysitting and menial jobs on campsites,



Simon and Christine Stevens, who left England and bankruptcy for a villa and a thriving business in France. "For us Basildon does not exist. We are Europeans now"

cleaning some of the filthiest caravans I have ever seen." In his cool and spacious dining room, Mr Stevens relates over lunch how the family's fortunes picked up after he saw a neglected Jaguar XK 150 outside a garage in Grasse. "I went in and told them that I could bring that car back up to concours condition — and I did. From that moment, I was

rolling. Word went round that there was an English mechanic in the area who knew his classic motors."

Mr Stevens leads the way to the immaculately kept lot at the side of his villa where there are vintage Rolls-Royces, elderly Jaguars and other mint-condition classics. "These belong to my English, Dutch and Swedish clients," he says proudly. "I

don't think they have any complaints about my work."

When pressed, Mrs Stevens admits to missing fish and chips and occasionally pops back to Essex for a binge. Her daughter-in-law, Nicola, sometimes craves Kentucky Fried Chicken.

Return trips to Basildon — and they are few — confirm the family in their collective view that life is sweet in the

South of France. "We have sun, security and a view to die for. But most of all we are very happy," says Mrs Stevens. Her husband is not the size of man you ask about income, just in case his gentle manner should crumble, but plainly he is doing very nicely thank you.

However, money seems relatively unimportant to Mr Stevens because he has found something else — contentment. "The last time I went back — I won't call it home — was a nightmare. I played down our lives here, but everyone was still very jealous. For us Basildon does not exist, we are Europeans now. Something special has happened and we are very grateful," he said, as he beamed out over his hillside so far from the Essex flatlands.

Football fan in exile frequently flies 5,000 miles to see Magpies in action

EVERY Newcastle United match is an away fixture for Graham Edmondson — 5,000 miles away. Mr Edmondson, who emigrated to Texas three years ago, has spent thousands of pounds crossing the Atlantic to see his favourite team playing.

"I get back to Britain every five weeks and the first thing I do is look to see who Newcastle are playing," he said. Mr Edmondson, 36, keeps in touch with the team's fortunes with video recordings of every game and newspaper cuttings. He admits: "I'm become

ing obsessive and am basing my life around Newcastle's fixtures."

The training manager and consultant, who left Ellingham, Northumberland, for Dallas, gets to about a third of Newcastle's games. He has a season ticket in the East Stand at St James's Park.

His friend Warren Walker, 27, who goes to the matches with Mr Edmondson, said: "It doesn't matter where he goes in the world to work, he's always got time to come back and see Newcastle." When he cannot get home for matches, he lends his season ticket to

friends. Mr Walker, landlord of the Pack Horse Inn in Ellingham, said Mr Edmondson would be flying back for Newcastle's final game of the season, against Tottenham Hotspur on May 5, which could decide the destiny of the Premiership title.

The average price of a return flight from Dallas to Newcastle is £283, according to travel agents. Returning to Britain every five weeks during the football season over the past three years would have cost £6,792.

"Newcastle means a lot to me

and it can be odd living in the USA," Mr Edmondson said. "When I'm not at the games I get very tense. I can't pick up the games on radio so instead of waiting for the final whistle I wait for a phone call from back home to get the score."

Mr Edmondson has formed his own junior football team in Texas — the Dallas Magpies. Star of the side is his son Charlie, 4, who is already showing signs of following his father's fanaticism. Mr Edmondson said: "Charlie was asked to sing an English song at

school and he chose the one he remembers best: *Up the Premier League We Go*."

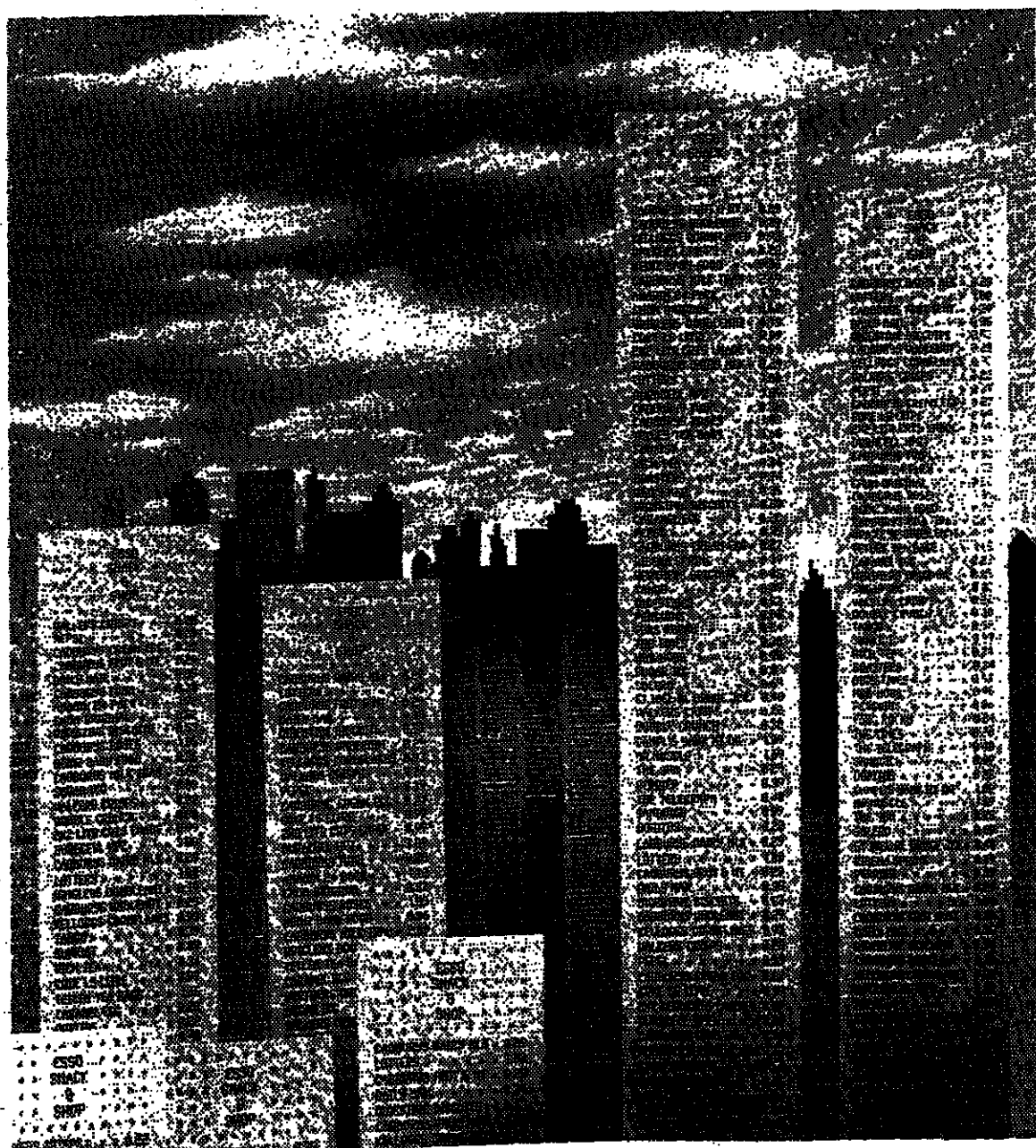
His wife Angela and other children, Holly, 8, and Juliet, 6, are also keen Newcastle fans. "The whole family love Newcastle and when they win we're the happiest family in America," Mr Edmondson said.

But watching the matches on video is a poor substitute for the real thing. "I sit there with a bottle of Brown Ale in my hand, but it's not the same as being there. Exile can be hell."



Graham Edmondson and his son Charlie, star of the Dallas Magpies

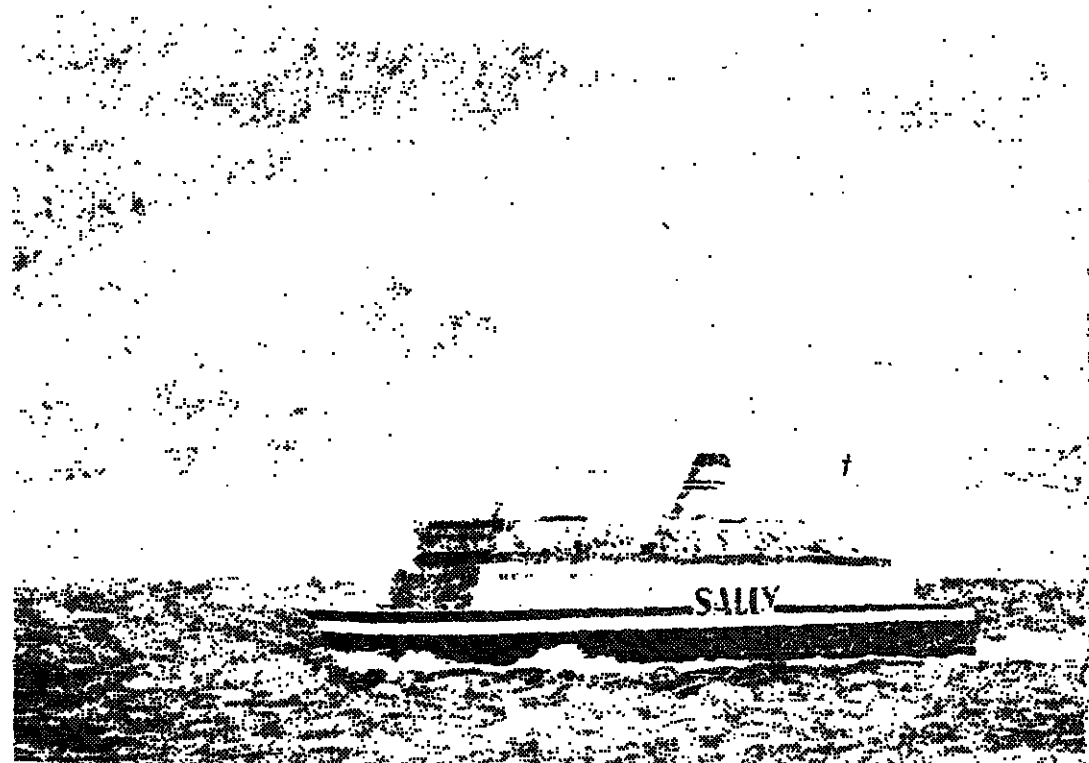
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SALLY
THE ART OF SMOOTH SAILING

Passengers who paid up to £21,000 for 116-day cruise furious as voyage is abandoned in the Red Sea

Cunard braces itself for compensation bill

THE CRUISE

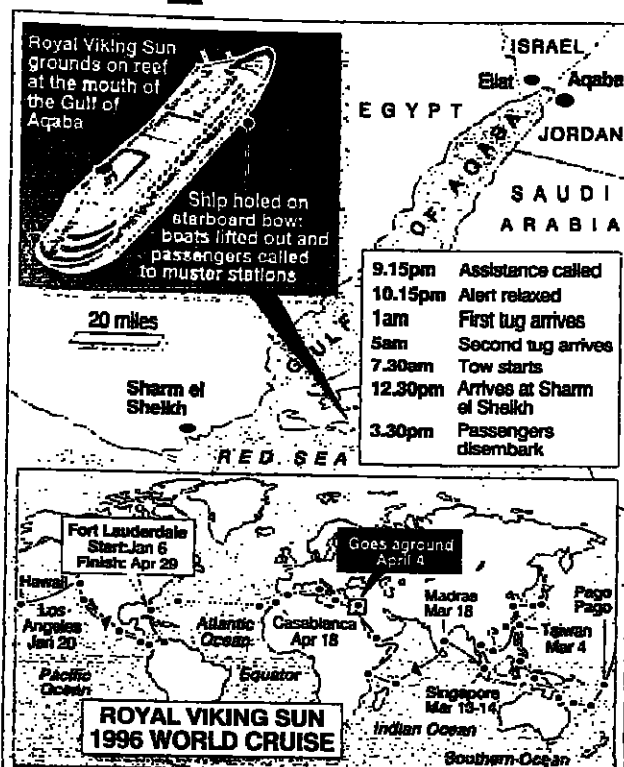
REPORTS BY
ANDREW PIERCE

CUNARD is facing a huge compensation bill after 560 passengers were evacuated yesterday afternoon from the stricken *Royal Viking Sun* cruise liner, which was holed after striking a coral reef in the Red Sea.

An inquiry has been ordered into the accident, which has deeply embarrassed Cunard. Passengers, including 54 Britons, who had paid up to £21,000 for the 116-day voyage, were in hotels in Egypt last night preparing to fly back to Britain today.

It was reported that some of the passengers were on board as compensation after Cunard's *MV Sagaford* ground to a halt in February in the South China Sea, midway through a world voyage, when fire broke out in her generators. Cunard denied the report.

The new setback comes only 15 months after the company settled a £7.5 million compensation claim from the QE2's December 1994 cruise which was launched before a £30 million refit had been completed. Last year the troubled company lost £16.4 million.



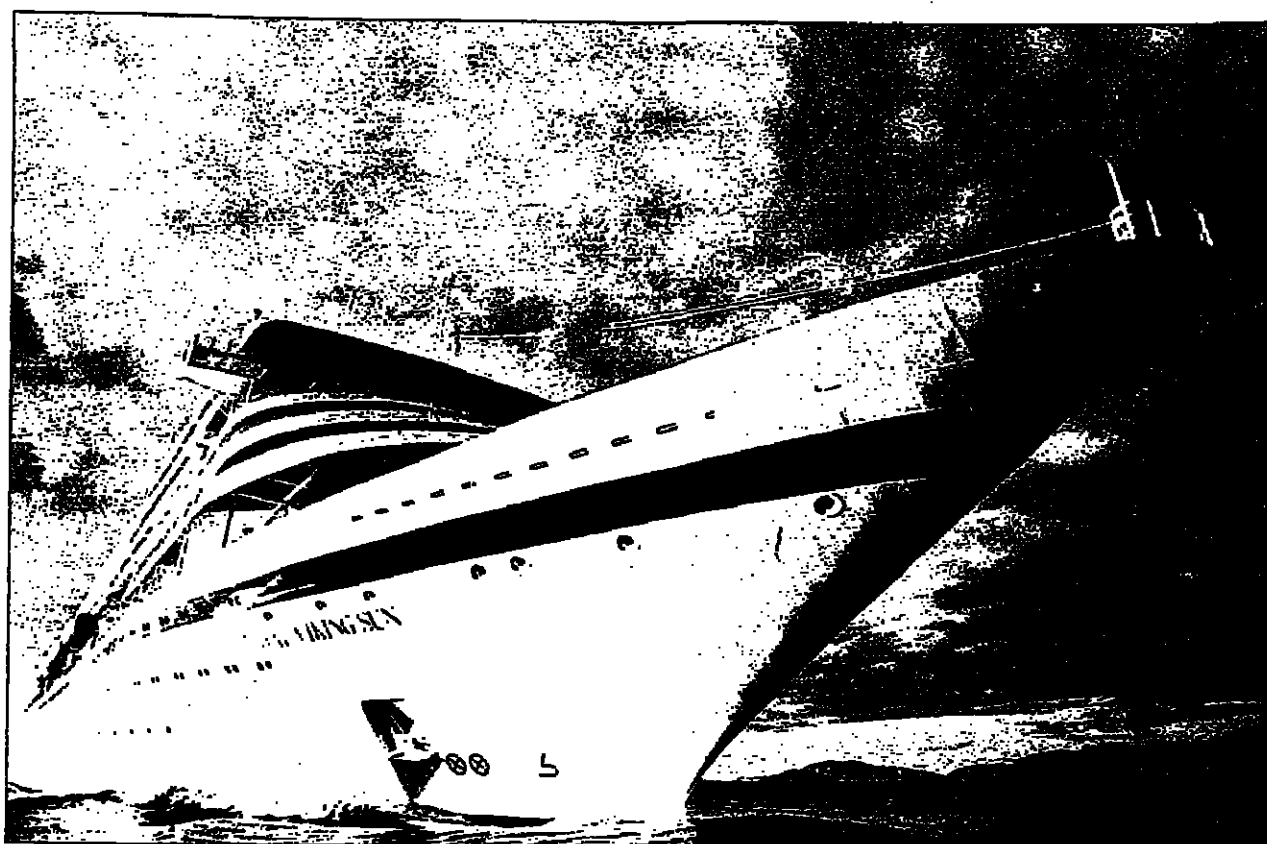
The majority of the passengers were in the dining rooms when the ship struck the reef at 9.15pm on Thursday as it was sailing up the Strait of Tiran in the Red Sea on its way to Aqaba in Jordan. There was a loud crash and the lights went out. A hole two

and a half feet wide by a foot high was gouged in the starboard side of the hull below the water line. Road Elman, the ship's technical engineer, said: "The ship shook, as though we had hit the ground or something."

Distress calls from the ship, which had listed eight degrees, were sent out when water flooded into two engine rooms and power was lost. Passengers, many in bathgowns and some in pyjamas, were ordered to lifeboat stations in their lifejackets. The weather was warm and the sea was calm. They remained by the lifeboats for an hour until the alert was called off when the crew reduced the degree of list.

The vessel, which was stuck on the reef, was moved within five minutes yesterday morning by tugboats from Aqaba and towed to the Egyptian port of Sharm el Sheikh in five hours. It was anchored in the port last night.

To the fury of many passengers Cunard announced that the cruise was abandoned and arrangements were being made to fly them home. They were taken to local hotels before being flown to Cairo for return flights back to London today.



The *Royal Viking Sun*: passengers were ordered to the lifeboats after she began to take on water

Cunard's most experienced masters. He had a team of Scandinavian officers but the 450-strong crew was of all nationalities.

Mr Spears said: "There was no local pilot on board because the waterway is not regarded as particularly tricky. We are confident one was not required. We cannot speculate on the cause. There are uncharted reefs in the Red Sea. No one panicked. Everything was done in an orderly fashion. Morale remained

high." Tempers were soothed when the five bars on board were made free for the remainder of the time passengers were on board and free champagne was served in every cabin.

The 37,845-ton *Royal Viking Sun* is the premier cruise liner in the world. It was built by Wärtsilä Marine Industries in Turku, Finland, in 1988 and passengers paid £72,000 for the 100-day maiden voyage. Cunard bought her in 1994 and it became the flagship of

the company's £219 million fleet. The round-the-world Discovery of Golden Civilisations cruise began at Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on January 6.

Mr Spears said that compensation claims would be looked at sympathetically and insisted that Cunard would hit its target of returning to profitability in 1998.

"We have a very good record of passengers coming back to Cunard," he said. "We have a loyal passenger base.

We are doing all we can to make sure people are comfortable. This is a world-class ship and an unfortunate incident. We're trying to respond in a world-class way."

Tim Webb, president of Abercrombie and Kent Overseas Limited, the ground handlers for the ship in Egypt, said that nobody was injured and the passengers appeared to be in good spirits. "They did not appear to be very upset. I think they understood the situation," he said.

Luxury of seeing the world from a croquet court

THE £75 million *Royal Viking Sun*, which boasts the world's only seaborne croquet court, has no facilities to detect hidden objects beneath the waves unless they are directly underneath the hull.

The 674ft liner, which was nearing the end of its 116-day cruise, has the latest radar equipment. A master qualified to captain the ship is always at the helm. The radar picks out objects only above the surface. The vessel, which travels at up to 21 knots, has a draught of 24ft and an echo sounder system, that tells the depth below the hull.

Bill Spears, director of public relations for Cunard, said: "It detects uncharted obstacles directly below the surface. If you were in a car it would tell you what is directly underneath your vehicle but not what was coming up."

Passengers, mainly pensioners, had paid up to £21,000 for the world cruise. They had gone ashore in more than 25 countries, including Australia, China and India, by the time the collision happened.

The ship set sail on January 6 from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and was due to return on April 29. The 500 passengers had travelled in style. Facilities include five restaurants and bars, a casino, theatre, library, card room, spa and sporting facilities, glass-walled lifts and oak-panelled

THE BOAT

lounges. The ship is rated the finest in the world by the *Berlitz Guide for Cruising and Cruise Ships*. Some passengers never set foot on dry land. There is plenty to occupy them on board: two swimming pools, three wine cellars, a casino and ballrooms.

The ship's first ports of call were Costa Rica and Acapulco. It then sailed to Los Angeles, San Francisco and Hawaii. On February 2 it crossed the international date-line to Fiji, cruised the Coral Sea and on to Australia and the Philippines.

The first overnight stop was in Hong Kong, the next in Shanghai, before moving to Hiroshima and another overnight stop in Osaka. The ship anchored in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, for 24 hours, with further overnight stays in Bangkok and Singapore. The cruise then visited Madras and the Seychelles, with a 24-hour stay in Mombassa.

It entered the final phase of the cruise when it moved on to Yemen and across the Red Sea into Aqaba. The premature end of the cruise robbed the passengers of the chance to visit Suez City, Egypt, Beirut, Haifa, in Israel, Cyprus, Naples, Puerto Banus in Spain, Casablanca, Madeira and Bermuda.

Sailing back into troubled waters

CUNARD was once a name that evoked the golden age of sea travel. But the hoing of the *Royal Viking Sun* is the latest in a series of public relations disasters.

The QE2 used to be one of the wonders of the holiday-making world, along with Concorde and the Orient Express. That was before the Christmas 1994 cruise, which began before a £30 million refit had been completed. Passengers had to share the trip with a team of British workmen who were trying to finish the refurbishment but succumbed to sea-sickness.

Passengers who had to contend with floods, rubble-strewn decks and exploding lavatories relayed their horror stories to the world's media by mobile telephone.

The liner berthed in New York—and was not allowed to leave until essential repairs were carried out, after US coastguards accused Cunard of risking passengers' lives.

Passengers launched a class action in New York for compensation. The final payout was £7.5 million. Just when Cunard had begun to recover from the humiliation, port officials in Southampton condemned food hygiene on the QE2 last summer and threatened legal action.

In 1993, Cunard was fined £1,000 and ordered to pay £120 after complaints that a cruise

THE COMPANY

advertised as a "two-day" trip lasted 38 hours.

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Some of the passengers were compensated by joining the current world cruise of the *Royal Viking Sun*.

The latest debacle will once more thrust Eric Flounders, Cunard's belligerent public relations manager, into the media spotlight.

Mr Flounders, 48, is, by his own admission, not typical of the breed. He eschews gin and tonic in favour of a pint.

The former teacher, once Liberal Democrat leader of Tower Hamlets council in east London, stood for Parliament but quit politics because he tired of the in-fighting.

However, Mr Flounders can at least make light of his troubles. "When the telephone goes and it's a newsdesk, my heart sinks," he says. "It usually means a ship has."

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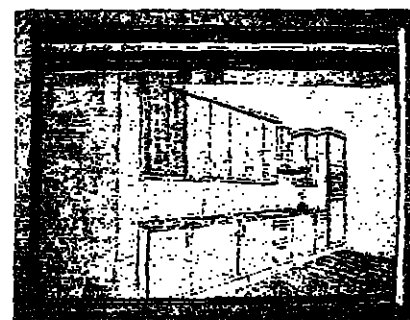
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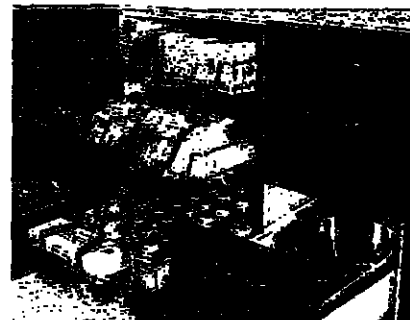
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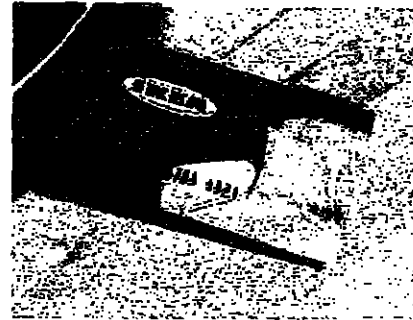
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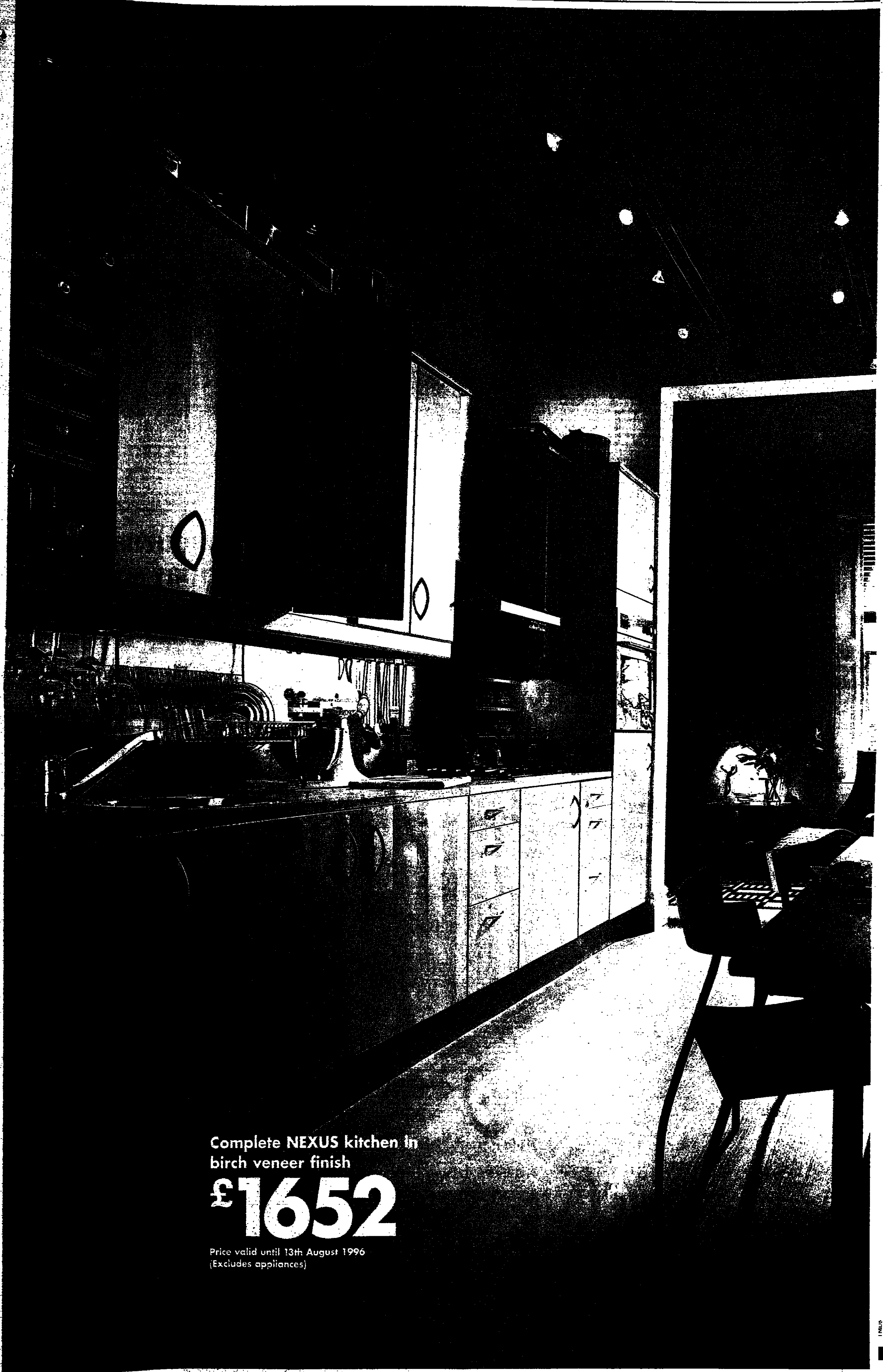
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After 650 years of ruin, it was sold as 'suitable for conversion'. Instead the buyer's life was changed

Resurrection for church that found a saviour

By RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

A CHURCH which lost its last parishioners to the Black Death re-opened for worship last night for the first time in more than 600 years, after being rescued from dereliction by a non-churchgoer.

The tiny Norman building was covered in graffiti and up for sale as suitable for conversion into a house when Douglas Chapman, a chartered surveyor, fell in love with it at first sight. But instead of converting it into a home, he decided to restore it in medieval detail.

Now the floor is strewn with straw and herb-scented leaves and the building lit with candles, as it would have been when it was built in the 11th century. Its future is non-denominational: Christian and Buddhist chants were part of last night's Good Friday service.

The church, surrounded by fields on the North Downs near Gillingham, Kent, is open for visitors to look around over Easter. The village it once served, Dode — named after a ninth century Anglo Saxon settler — fell into ruin and vanished like many others after the plague wiped out the inhabitants.

Mr Chapman, 51, from Detling, near Maidstone, has now named the church Dode. Last night he said: "I don't



Abandoned since the Black Death, the interior of the church is now restored with medieval touches

know why I bought it — I just fell in love with it. It's a beautiful place. I decided it would be a lovely thing to look after."

Mr Chapman was brought up in the Church of England and believes in the "deity" but does not describe himself as a practising Christian. He will now be attending the services and hopes the doors can be permanently open to passing visitors for meditation and prayer.

The Roman Catholic Church put the grey, stone building up for sale four years

ago, expecting it to be converted into a dwelling place. Mr Chapman had the support of the local community when he bought it for £67,000. He is now seeking funds to build a 15th-century-style retreat house next door.

Services such as compline, the monastic evening office, will take place every fortnight at times chosen deliberately so that they do not clash with services at nearby parish churches. Worship will be conducted by local Anglican and Catholic clergy.

Mr Chapman is encourag-

ing multi-faith events, and intends no particular denominational allegiance. He said: "It was a Catholic church which survived the Reformation because the village it used to serve was destroyed by the Black Death in 1349.

"The building was the only one in the village of any substance, but within a very short time the Bishop of Rochester wrote to the priest and told him to shut up shop because he just could not support a church there any longer. I have a copy of that letter. The building just sat there for the next few hundred years. It gradually fell into disrepair and began to fall down. A roof was put back at the beginning of this century, but the walls are the original walls. It was just a bare shell when I purchased it.

"I'm not a churchgoer. I'm not religious. I believe in a God but I'm not a fully paid up member of any church. I was brought up in the Christian faith but I'm not a regular churchgoer, although I believe there is a deity.

"I cannot explain why I bought it. You have to go to the church itself to understand it. You walk in the door and either say 'I understand why you bought it' or you don't. If you understand it, you are on my wavelength. I certainly didn't want to see it turned into a house. I'm a great lover of old buildings. This is my



Douglas Chapman at Dode: "I'm not a churchgoer but I fell in love with this place. It's beautiful"

own little campaign. My personal campaign. I love the building, the atmosphere. You don't have to be a paid-up member of the church to understand that it is a holy place."

Although multi-faith worship will take place there, Mr

Chapman insisted: "It remains a Christian church which is open to all."

The only reason there is no Easter Day service is because all the local clergy are too busy taking services in their own churches.

Mr Chapman added: "This

is a rare and magical place, looking today like it did some 900 years ago when it was first built in the time of William Rufus, the son of the Conqueror.

"As you stand at the stone altar, you stand where over 800 years ago a priest told of

the death of Thomas à Becket. As you kneel in the nave you stand where almost 650 years ago the villagers prayed for their loved ones as the Black Death swept England."

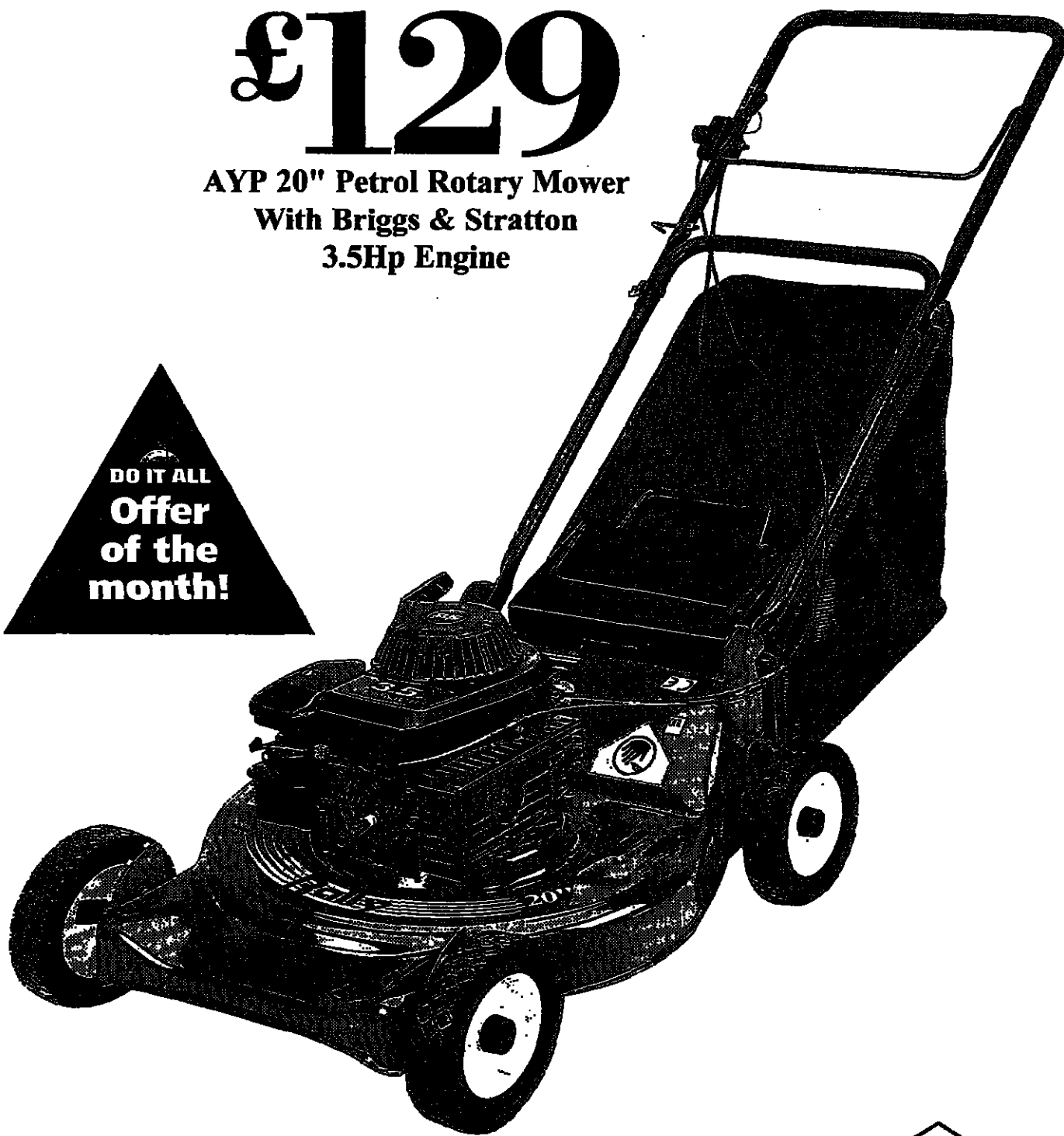
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Weekend, page 3

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Bishop mourns loss of Good Friday solemnity

By RUTH GLEDHILL

A LEADING Church of England bishop condemned retailers, publicans and local authorities yesterday for devaluing the meaning of Easter by treating Good Friday like a normal working day. The Archbishop of Canterbury, however, said that the Church should adapt to the changing face of Sundays and Holy days.

The Right Rev Mark Santer, Bishop of Birmingham, said he was saddened that the true meaning of Easter was being lost. Speaking after leading a "witness" procession of about 1,000 Christians through the streets of Solihull, he said: "This is still a majority Christian country and for Christians Good Friday is one of the most solemn days in the year. Without remembering the Crucifixion on Good Friday you can't celebrate the Resurrection on Easter Sunday."

"It actually hurts me to see the world not noticing and not keeping it as a solemn day in the way it was done when I was a boy, when all the shops were shut. People were given time for reflection. If no day is special then life gets boring. People have got to get away from the notion that things like this are just a matter of individual choice. There has to be some sort of commercial



Bishop Santer: criticised shops, pubs and councils

and corporate decision to make an effort to keep days like Good Friday solemn."

This Easter weekend is the first under new licensing laws allowing pubs to open nearly all day yesterday and Easter Sunday.

Coventry City Council was criticised by the Bishop of Coventry, the Right Rev Simon Barrington-Ward, for new working practices which meant that two thirds of its staff worked yesterday. The Rev Lawrence Mortimer, the bishop's spokesman, said: "It has to be easy for Christians to say that they want to go to church on Good Friday and that is hard to do in this

present culture. We feel it is slightly unthinking."

The council said the change in working conditions had been made as part of measures negotiated with trades unions to save £2 million.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, said that the Church should not throw up its hands in horror when people went shopping instead of to church. Its task was to make the most of surveys showing that many people still believed in God and had a deep attachment to the Church.

"When I was growing up, with a non-churchgoing family and background, nevertheless Good Friday was special," he told Classic FM. "You didn't have to go to church, but there was something about the setting-apart of that day that was quite important. People took note of it."

"Now we go along to our shops and so on. Now I'm not one to mourn this for too long. We have to face the fact that we live in a changed world and therefore the Christian Church has got to adapt."

He said that the Easter story still carried a significant message and he was convinced of its truth. "I wouldn't be saying these things if I didn't believe them. In fact if I didn't believe them I wouldn't be doing this job."

An example of humility that we can all emulate

Credo

Michael Nazir-Ali

The story of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, during his farewell meal with them, continues to puzzle people today much as it puzzled people then. In most cultures, the younger serves the elder and the disciple serves the master. The reversal of these roles is unthinkable.

We know from St John's Gospel that Jesus did, indeed, feel that everything had been turned upside down. It is often said that the act of foot-washing was regarded as so degrading in the ancient world that Jewish masters could not require it of their Jewish slaves. On the other hand, it is also true that children washed their parents' feet and disciples the feet of their master.

But while Jesus's act was contrary to social convention, it was central to his understanding of his own ministry. When John speaks of Jesus "laying aside" his garments for the foot-washing, he is evoking also Jesus laying down his life and being laid in the tomb. God, in coming to dwell as man in Jesus, had emptied himself, taken the form of a slave and suffered for our sakes.

It is certainly correct to see in this action an example of

humility we can all emulate. Jesus makes this connection when he tells his disciples, "If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." This is why the Church continues to remind its ministers in particular, at this time, of the humble service to which they have been called.

At foot-washings in churches throughout the world this week, ministers are reminded that they are not greater than their master who washed his disciples' feet.

The story also tells us something about God. Here is a God who is worlds away from the effortless omnipotence which some ascribe to him. Here is a God who "though rich, yet for our sakes became poor", a God who is prepared even to taste pain and death because of his love for us. In Christ, God reveals himself not only as the one who has brought the world into being and who

directs its course, but as one who struggles to perfect a manifestly imperfect universe which is genuinely "other", and which can resist the divine operation.

In Christ we see the power of God and the wisdom of God. It is true that neither of these are easily recognised in the world. They are, nevertheless, only too real. It is through the powerlessness of service and sacrifice that the world is healed. It is on the cross that human beings are won back for God's purposes.

It is on the cross that God is revealed as suffering in and with his creation. The struggle between good and evil is real and costly. Patiently, God is working his purposes out, overcoming evil, healing the world and transforming lives.

God calls us to partnership with him in this great enterprise. It is a call to powerlessness, persecution and even loneliness. But as we serve God in this way, we become vehicles for God's power which changes us and those around us so that the world may be "charged with the grandeur of God".

□ The Right Rev Michael Nazir-Ali is Bishop of Rochester.

Handwritten text in Arabic script.

Dini launches poll crusade to rescue Italy from Right

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

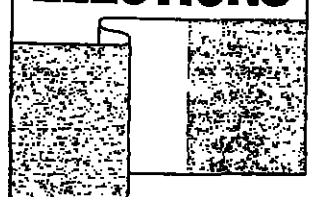
LAMBERTO DINI, the Italian Prime Minister, yesterday said he hoped to win this month's election with the help of the Left to save Italy from "the danger of right-wing extremism". In a reference to the growing power of the "post-Fascist" Alleanza Nazionale led by Gianfranco Fini, Signor Dini said he had entered the electoral race "to bring the moderates back where they belong".

Signor Dini said his 16 months in office at the head of a non-party "technocratic" Government had shown the need for "responsible" administration. "Extreme positions" had gained the upper hand in the Centre-Right coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi since it collapsed after eight months in 1994. Signor Dini stepped in as caretaker leader, but now hopes to stay in power. "I worry about whether the Right can be trusted to govern in the general interest, the collective interest. There is a risk that extreme positions will prevail on the Right ... and I see this as a danger to our country."

Signor Dini, a former banker and International Monetary Fund official, was Treasury Minister under Signor Berlusconi, and took over as interim leader in January 1995. At first he was seen as dull, but has won respect both at home and abroad. He resents Signor Berlusconi's jibe that he "invented" Signor Dini. "Actually he had difficulty persuading me to leave the Bank of Italy to

join him," he said. "But I wanted to help to open up a new era of free-market enterprise, take Italy into Europe and get public finances in order. When the Berlusconi coalition collapsed — not because of my doings. I might add — he suggested my name and agreed to a non-party government. But then he had second thoughts, and has been irresponsibly trying to bring me down ever since, whereas the Left has supported me."

ITALIAN ELECTIONS



Signor Dini said that the Right had tried to "cut him down to size. They felt, maybe this guy is growing too big, too visible, too credible, we must trim his wings." Instead he decided in February to form a party, Rinnovamento Italiana (Italian Renewal), with the help of his flamboyant wife, Donatella.

Signor Dini believes that he can attract a sufficient number of moderate votes to be a force within the Centre Left, which is "better placed to govern Italy than the Centre Right". He declined to say whether he hoped to supplant Romano

Prodi, the lacklustre economics professor who is the Centre Left's candidate for Prime Minister.

Signor Dini, who chaired the European Union's Turin summit which opened the Maastricht review conference, will chair the June EU summit in Florence, his home town. He claimed his economic policies had helped Italy to move closer to the criteria for a single currency, by reducing inflation and the budget deficit. The Verona meeting of EU Finance Ministers in ten days would help to define a "mechanism" for ensuring a stable currency relationship between countries inside monetary union and those outside.

But Italy still hoped to be in at the beginning, since "a monetary union that does not include two or three of the larger countries, such as Italy, will not be very significant ... A judgment will have to be made as to whether it is viable or useful to have too small a union, or whether it might be better to wait for a larger union."

Signor Dini said that the Florence summit would also discuss unemployment, cross-frontier crime, enlargement, and moves toward EU majority voting in all areas, including foreign and defence policy. "I doubt whether unanimity will be required even in foreign policy," Signor Dini said. "It would not be feasible for a country to be developed if one country was in a position to block an action in the field of foreign policy or defence."



Miroslav Siljegovic and his wife Colette with a Hemingway painting at their new cafe

New chapter opens for literary lions' Paris watering-hole

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

ONE of the most famous cafes in Paris, the Closierie des Lilas, the Left Bank haunt of such literary icons as Guillaume Apollinaire, Andre Gide, Ernest Hemingway and Paul Verlaine, was sold this week by the family who have run it for generations.

The new owner is Miroslav Siljegovic, a businessman from Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Closierie des Lilas is the second Paris landmark to be snapped up by Mr Siljegovic, who, 14 years ago, bought the Cafe de Flore, its long-time

rival and the preferred watering-hole of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir.

The Closierie des Lilas opened in 1847 on the site of the ancient Carthusian convent on the Rue d'Enfer — literally Hell Street. According to popular legend, the proprietor, Bullier, planted a thousand lilacs in the gardens.

The wine was cheap and on spring evenings students and aspiring poets gathered in the perfumed air to waltz the night away and sing along to

the strains of the most popular song of the moment, *Je n'aime pas les haricots* (I don't like green beans).

Bullier later renamed the popular dance hall after himself and moved his cafe across the street into a decaying stagecoach post. Its popularity has often been attributed to its location at the crossroads between Montparnasse and the Latin Quarter — a convenient meeting point for artists and philosophers from both districts. That it was then almost out in the country was an added attraction.

At the turn of the century, the Closierie des Lilas was the rallying point for the supporters of Dreyfus, while the *anti-dreyfusards* set up camp in the nearby Cafe de Flore, sparking the enduring rivalry.

The cafe's reputation spread: Lenin played chess on the terrace, Picasso, Léger and Brassens became regulars. After the Second World War, the cafe lost some of its gaiety. The Milan family who took over in 1952 introduced poetry readings and created literary prizes, endearing the Closierie des Lilas again to intellectuals and the Paris *beau monde*. More recent habitués included the actress Romy Schneider, the Shah of Iran, Michel Rocard, the former French Prime Minister, and Lionel Jospin, the new Socialist leader.

Hemingway immortalised the cafe in his tribute to Paris, painting an affectionate portrait of two waiters forced to wear American-style white jackets and shave off lovingly cultivated handlebar moustaches when the cafe changed hands in the 1920s.

Mr Siljegovic, who has bought the cafe for Fr25 million (£3.4 million), said yesterday that he had no plans to force such an indignity on his staff, saying: "I love this place. It makes me happy. I will not change a thing."

Former minister guilty of fraud

FROM REUTERS IN BRUSSELS

BELGIUM'S highest court yesterday found Guy Coeme, the former Defence Minister, and seven associates guilty of fraud and abuse of public office.

The case, the first time since 1865 that a former minister has been tried for abuse in office, was the first of several expected to reveal the scale of political corruption in Belgium in the late 1980s.

Coeme was given a two-year suspended jail sentence and ordered to repay sums he received illegally from Inusop, a political research company at the centre of the scandal.

He was also stripped of his civil and political rights for five years, throwing into question his position as a member of parliament and as Mayor of Waremmme.

Camille Javeau, an Inusop director, received a two-year sentence, suspended for one year. He was also ordered to repay funds he obtained from Inusop by falsifying bills, travel and other expenses. The other defendants received suspended sentences ranging from six months to one year.

The trial, which took place after a five-year inquiry, is expected to be followed by others dealing with allegedly corrupt politicians in the late 1980s.

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Experts dismiss 'Jesus tomb' find by television crew

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

AS THOUSANDS of Christians yesterday thronged the Via Dolorosa, the route many believe Jesus took to his crucifixion, there was scorn among Bible scholars and Israeli archaeologists for a BBC television claim to be broadcasting tomorrow night that the final resting place of the bones of Christ may have been found.

The Easter Sunday edition of *Heart of the Matter*, presented by Joan Bakewell, will attempt to attribute more than coincidence to the discovery in 1980 of a series of ossuaries from a tomb near Jerusalem that allegedly bear the names Joseph, Mary and Jesus.

Claims by the programme's production team, which stumbled across the discovery weeks before its Easter edition about the Resurrection was to be broadcast, have provoked incredulity among experts.

L. Y. Rahmani, an archaeologist who has catalogued almost all the 1,000 ossuaries found in Israel, said the BBC's conclusions were absurd. The names Joseph, Mary and Je-

sus were common in antiquity, he said, and some ten ossuaries bearing the name of Jesus in either Hebrew or Greek have been found. Variations of Miriam, from which Mary is derived, and Joseph are far more common.

"The fact that in this case you have the combination of names in the same tomb is simply a matter of statistics," said the former curator of the Antiquities Authority in whose warehouse the empty ossuaries were found and put on show for the press this week.

Another ossuary in the tomb unearthed in 1980 and reported at the time in *Archaeological News* with no attempt to link it to the Bible, bears the name of Yehuda bar Yeshua, or Judah son of Jesus. The BBC programme raises the possibility that a second ossuary in the tomb inscribed with a Greek version of Miriam, contained the bones of Mary Magdalene, the fallen woman saved by Jesus, who was one of the principal witnesses of the Resurrection. "Well, it is a

nice news story for Easter," said Moshe Nisgav, spokesman for the Antiquities Authority, which has been astonished at those in the BBC apparently willing to encourage belief in claims which, if true, would undermine 2,000 years of the Christian religion.

"But the archaeological evidence shows that the chances of these being the actual burials of the Holy Family are almost nil."

Many biblical experts in Jerusalem believe that the world should have been alerted to the tendentious approach of the programme from an alleged overexcited remark by the British researcher, Chris Mann, who spotted the ossuaries in the shelves of the warehouse and commented: "I felt like the balls of the national lottery coming up one by one."

Father Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, professor of New Testament at the Jerusalem Ecole Biblique, dismissed the BBC claim as fanciful. "They are all very common, perhaps the most common names," Father O'Connor said. "It would be a statistical abnormality if you do not find them in conjunction at some point."

He added that most scholars believe that the biblical Joseph was buried in Galilee in what is now northern Israel, while Mary is believed to be buried in Jerusalem. Catholics and Protestants have different beliefs about the location of the tomb from which they believe Jesus rose on the third day after his burial.

In keeping with Israeli law, the bones found in the caskets now at the centre of controversy were turned over years ago to rabbis who gave them a Jewish burial, and no one in Jerusalem appears to be still alive who might know precisely where they were re-buried.



Joan Bakewell at the tomb near Jerusalem where caskets, allegedly with biblical names, were found



Shinichiro Kaneko screams as a four-inch nail is driven into his palm yesterday

Japanese takes turn on cross

FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS IN SAN PEDRO CUTUD, PHILIPPINES

A JAPANESE man who believed it would help to cure a sick relative joined at least a dozen Filipinos who were nailed to crosses yesterday in rituals re-enacting the death of Jesus.

Shinichiro Kaneko, 30, screamed as four-inch nails

were driven through his palms into the wooden cross, which was then lifted to a vertical position. With a crown of barbed wire on his head, he withstood the ordeal under hot sun in San Pedro Cutud, 30 miles north of Manila, for about two minutes until he was taken down and his hands bandaged.

Several thousand villagers and tourists watched as 11

people, including Mr Kaneko, were crucified by attendants dressed as Roman centurions. Ropes supported the participants' weight while on the cross. Most had only their palms nailed.

Throughout the day, scores of bloody penitents walked through the village, beating their bare backs with ropes and splashing spectators with blood. (AP)

How agents won over Unabomber suspect's family

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

THE BROTHER of Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber suspect, wrestled with his conscience before telling FBI agents of his suspicions. David Kaczynski, 46, a social worker from Schenectady, New York, did not appear to know there was a \$1 million (£650,000) reward for information leading to the bomber's arrest.

Mr Kaczynski, a painfully shy man whose act of fraternal betrayal has cast him into a vortex of media attention, contacted the FBI in January via a lawyer.

Agents needed patience as they gradually persuaded him that family came second to country. The same arguments were used to persuade the suspect's octogenarian mother, Wanda, to allow agents to search the attic of the family home.

A friend spoke of Mr Kaczynski's "great personal integrity" and an FBI source said the younger sibling was "torn, as anyone would be, between doing what is right, and loyalty to his brother... This was not some guy who walked in with information to collect the \$1 million reward."

Mr Kaczynski, also a former country recluse, went to the FBI after he found scribbles by his brother which resembled the anti-technology manifesto of the Unabomber. He was anxious not to besmirch his older brother's name if he was innocent, and asked agents to be gentle.

When the arrest happened, it was conducted without force. Ted Kaczynski tried briefly to retreat inside his cabin, but then surrendered peacefully and talked politely to agents as he was being escorted to jail in Helena, Montana.

Two typewriters found at his cabin were yesterday being tested to see if they are the machines on which the Unabomber's 35,000-word manifesto and various notes

were printed. The list of other items found at the cabin reads like the inventory of a science workshop. It includes pipes of galvanized metal, copper and plastic, batteries and a plastic wire, hacksaw blades, drills, aluminium ingots, lead, silver oxide, potassium chlorate and sodium. There were also books on bomb-making in English and Spanish, which the highly intelligent Mr Kaczynski speaks fluently.

Law enforcers described how agents stalked out Mr Kaczynski's remote cabin for weeks, but it is questionable how successful they were in remaining undetected.

Residents of the small town of Lincoln, Montana, described how, in the weeks leading up to the arrest, they noticed a number of strangers in their midst — men with large jackets, short haircuts, walkie-talkies and a city manner.

They rightly identified them as FBI undercover agents, but presumed they were in Lincoln to monitor the activities of the Sauerkraut Gang, a group of knife-wielding crazies who live in the mountains who were held to be far more dangerous than the eccentric hermit. He visited town once a week to buy tins of Spam from the store and rode back to his cabin on an old black bicycle which had a yellow flag on its handlebars to alert what little traffic Lincoln has to its weaving, wobbling progress down the empty country lanes.

Yesterday Lincoln townsfolk were basking in their fame. Karen Potter, owner of Lincoln's Blackfoot Market general store, recalled that she sometimes tried to strike up conversations with Ted Kaczynski. Once, when he had not been in for a few weeks, she asked where he had been. She was rewarded with a glare that made her understand that "personal questions" would not be welcome.

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Britain urged to make more use of Commonwealth ties

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

BRITAIN is not taking full economic advantage of the Commonwealth, especially in Asia and emerging markets, and the Government and the secretariat should do more to revive it and bolster its values.

That is the main conclusion of a critical parliamentary report drawn up after a year of hearings and evidence to the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs.

MPs accuse the Government of neglecting the Commonwealth, politically and economically, threatening weaker members with development aid cuts, and failing to keep up with changes in the 53-nation body, members of which belong to 22 different regional alliances.

"The old Commonwealth ties could become, for the United Kingdom, the new Commonwealth opportunities," the report says. It expresses astonishment that better use is not made of connections and the integration of a global network of communications and friendship — "the envy of our trading partners".

This is especially true of new business openings. "We are not satisfied that the Commonwealth link in trade development with emerging markets is being developed as fully as it might," the I MPs say. The Department of Trade and Industry should set up a

special officer to identify such opportunities.

The MPs also highlight the geographic and political breadth of the Commonwealth which, they say, is becoming a standard-bearer of democracy, good government and human rights. They praise the Commonwealth commitments to rights and good government made at the 1991 Harare summit, but say those need amplifying to be effective. The secretariat should be revamped to make it more able to secure greater compliance with the Harare principles.

"What was once a 'club' of countries all too ready both to criticise and to make demands on the former imperial power is now a network with quite different interests and ambitions," David Howell, the committee chairman, said. This offered vast potential that Britain should develop imaginatively.

Recent Overseas Development Administration budget cuts are condemned, and blame for Britain's lukewarm attitude is laid largely at the door of the Foreign Office.

The MPs are cautious about expanding membership. They note that there was controversy over the human rights record of Cameroon, and suggest that admitting Mozambique, a former Portuguese colony, set an awkward precedent.

Malaria epidemic kills 55 in South Africa

FROM RAY KENNEDY IN JOHANNESBURG

AN epidemic of malaria sweeping through low-altitude areas of South Africa has claimed at least 55 lives, more than five times as many as last year, and infected more than 5,000 people since the beginning of January.

According to the Health Ministry officials the worst could yet be to come as April and May are peak months for the disease.

The outbreak was forecast during disastrous floods that ended crippling drought during January and February in large parts of the country. There is increasing concern in medical circles that some of the strains now being detected appear to be resistant to the chloroquine-based anti-ma-

laria pills that are available without prescription in South Africa.

The malaria-carrying mosquito, *Anopheles arabiensis*, does not occur in high areas of the country, which include the Johannesburg region, nor along the southwestern Cape Coast, the most popular tourist destination. Nevertheless, tourists are being warned to take a course of anti-malaria drugs, particularly if they visit the Kruger National Park, the worst source of the outbreak.

Death toll: A meningitis epidemic sweeping parts of West Africa has killed 2,045 people in the landlocked state of Burkina Faso, health officials said. (Reuters)

EU envoy caught in gunfire

Kismayu, Somalia: Emma Bonino, the European Union's Commissioner for European Affairs, was caught up in gunfire yesterday, during a visit to this Somali port. Shooting by militiamen forced her convoy to stop on the airport road as she drove into the town, and later as she prepared to leave.

The delegation, wearing flak-jackets, rushed to their Belgian Air Force Hercules C130, and British pilot Mark Baines made a swift take-off. (Reuters/AP)

Electric cable kills 14 on bus

Hyderabad: Fourteen people who were riding on top of a bus were electrocuted when the vehicle hit high-tension cables in southern India. Police said the passengers died after bicycles on top of the bus came into contact with the wires. The dead included four women and four children, among them a six-month-old baby. (Reuters)

Girl of 10 gives birth in Brazil

Brasilia: A ten-year-old Brazilian girl, raped by a neighbour in the southwestern city of Rondonopolis, has given birth by Caesarean section to a girl who will be given up for adoption, the *Estado de São Paulo* newspaper reported. The neighbour, 47, has been charged by police. (Reuters)

Scientist held on child sex charge

Washington: A Nobel prize winner and one of America's most prominent scientists has been arrested on charges that he molested one of more than 50 children he had "adopted" from Micronesia and New Guinea (Tom Rhodes writes). Daniel Gajdusek, 72, is being held on £650,000 bail.

Pray as you earn

Chisinau: Hard-up Moldovan monks at the ancient Neamts monastery are being paid by a leading financial group to pray for profits as the former Soviet republic faces an economic crisis. (Reuters)



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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

SATURDAY APRIL 6 1996

Lloyd's must increase settlement, says report

By Jon Ashworth

LLOYD'S of London must improve the terms of its £2.8 billion settlement offer to names if an ambitious blueprint for the future is to succeed, an independent report has concluded. But the reconstruction and renewal (R&R) plan remains the best solution available to the market.

No section of the Lloyd's community would benefit if Lloyd's was to cease to carry on business, according to the report by Slaughter and May, the law firm. True finality, in the sense of capping liabilities to policyholders, cannot be achieved by R&R, but it would at least allow some form of line to be drawn with the past. The firm acted as adviser to the Validation Steering Group

(VSG), set up to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the R&R programme. Controversy has erupted over the refusal by Alan Porter, one of the three VSG members, to endorse the report, which has the approval of Sir David Beriman and Damon de Laszlo, his co-members. Mr Porter is critical of the report's lack of financial analysis.

Slaughter and May concedes that it has not considered the calculations or figures that underpin R&R. It does not comment on any financial aspects of R&R or Equitas, the proposed new reinsurance company designed to take on liabilities for 1992 and earlier. It concludes that Equitas provides the best form of finality for names, even though the

possibility that it might fail cannot be ruled out.

The report accepts that many names are suspicious about the circumstances in which they were encouraged to join Lloyd's. It concludes, however, that it is "most unlikely" that allegations of fraud at Lloyd's, if proved, would enable names to avoid their underwriting liabilities.

The report supports the view that an independent inquiry into Lloyd's would not be helpful at this stage. It says: "We recognise that many names have been seriously damaged by what has happened at Lloyd's and remain suspicious about the circumstances in which this has occurred. However, we think it unlikely that an inquiry into the past will

contribute materially to solutions in the present."

There is no obvious alternative to R&R which would enable Lloyd's to continue as at present. If Lloyd's were to cease to carry on business, either through liquidation, run-off, or intervention by the Department of Trade and Industry, no section of the Lloyd's community is likely to be better off.

Slaughter and May says names will ultimately have to make up their own minds on R&R. It adds: "Many names are outraged by what has happened in Lloyd's. There is little doubt that names occupy the moral high-ground. However, names' fundamental problem is that they cannot reasonably expect to escape

from their underwriting liabilities. All that some of them have are claims for damages against people with limited funds, many of whom are other names, together with a variety of ingenious defences. These forces have been deployed with considerable vigour and skill and have succeeded in bringing Lloyd's to its present position."

The report cautions: "There will undoubtedly be some names who remain so angry that they do not care whether Lloyd's survives or not. This is why more than £2.8 billion may be required for the R&R proposals to achieve acceptance."

Lloyd's welcomed the report, and said negotiations aimed at improving its settlement offer were continuing.

Surge in US jobs hits bond prices

FROM RICHARD THOMSON
IN NEW YORK

ANOTHER healthy rise in American jobs yesterday sent the Treasury bond market into a bout of heavy selling again and appeared to rule out any further cuts in US interest rates in the short term.

The economy created 140,000 new jobs in the non-farm sector in March, many more than Wall Street economists had been expecting. This followed a rise of 624,000 jobs in February, revised from last month's initial estimate of 705,000 which had sent the Dow Jones industrial average into a 171 point-plunge and wiped three full points off bond prices.

A handful of dealers were at their desks in the City of London yesterday to monitor events, the first time they have been expected to work on Good Friday.

The US unemployment rate edged up to 5.6 per cent from 5.5 per cent in February, the Labour Department said.

Bond investors worried about rapid employment creation leading to higher prices, had been banking on yesterday's figures to show a fall in jobs, so reversing some of February's surge. However, the fact that a large number of jobs were created once again appeared to confirm that the US economy is on a healthy growth path and does not need any additional stimulus from lower rates.

The US bond market, the only big financial market to open yesterday, was reckoning that the next move in US rates might now be upwards. The benchmark 30-year Treasury bond fell by one point in the first minute of trading.

The market steadied slightly but selling then began again, sending the long bond down another point. Traders are braced for a sharp fall on the stock market. The long bond yield rose to 6.8 per cent.

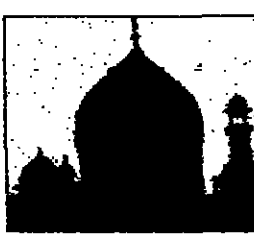
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Virgin buying Belgian airline

By Martin Barrow

RICHARD BRANSON has taken a significant step in developing a substantial European airline with an agreement to acquire Belgium's second largest carrier for 1.8 billion Belgian francs (£382 million).

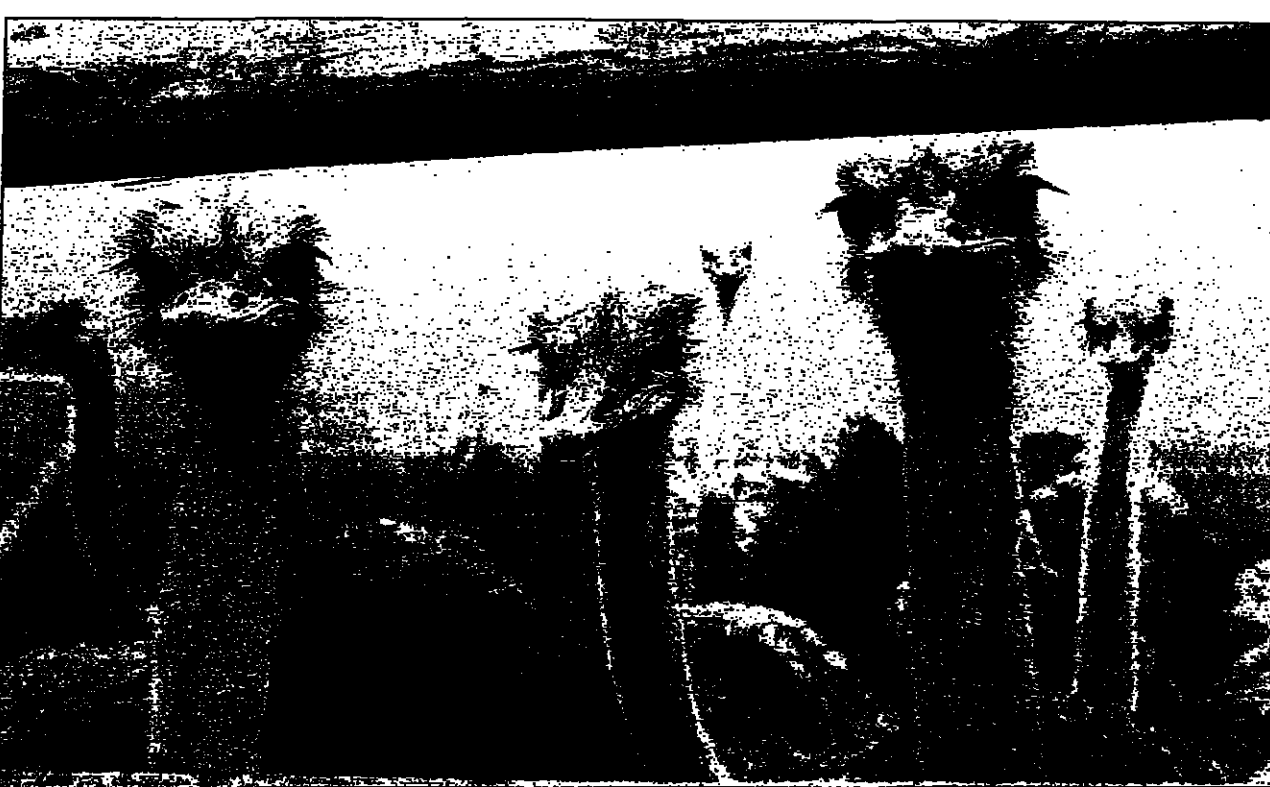
Mr Branson's Virgin Group yesterday signed a final agreement to buy 90 per cent of EuroBelgian Airlines (EBA), with an option to acquire the remaining 10 per cent.

The deal is likely to be completed by the end of the month, after which the Virgin colours will replace the EBA livery. Although about half of EBA's business is charter, the airline has four scheduled services out of Brussels. Virgin plans to double the number of scheduled routes within 18 months.

Unlike many European airlines, EBA, established only four years ago, is profitable, earning £8 million before tax last year after pioneering the concept of ticketless travel in the Benelux countries. It now has 12 Boeing 737s and has ordered another two. Last year it transported 1.3 million passengers, compared with the five million passengers flown by Sabena, Belgium's national carrier.

The vendors of EBA are City Hotels, a Belgian company, and NEI, a holding company based in Luxembourg acting on behalf of a group of private investors. The decision to acquire an airline in continental Europe in part reflects Virgin's frustration at its inability to gain more slots at Heathrow and Gatwick airports.

It also coincides with the recent announcement that the Virgin-backed London and Continental Railways was successful in bidding for the £3 billion contract to build the Channel Tunnel rail link and operate Eurostar trains to Paris and Brussels.



Investors are left wondering whether the bird in the field will be worth the money they have paid out

International hunt begins for Ostrich Farming assets

By Karen Zagor and Robert Miller

AN international investigation to trace assets belonging to the Ostrich Farming Corporation (OFC) is believed to be underway. The inquiry is thought to involve authorities in Britain and Belgium.

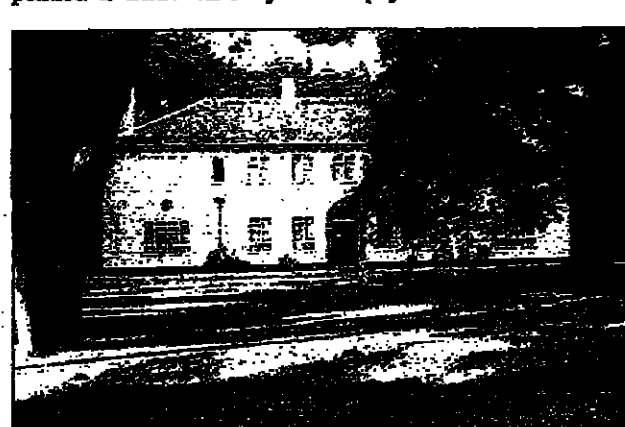
Based in Nottingham, the company attracted millions of pounds from several thousand investors by promising minimum annual returns of 51.6 per cent for five years. It is now the subject of a winding-up petition, presented this week by the Department of Trade and Industry.

OFC's managing director is Brian Ketchell, the entrepreneur who previously ran Video Magic, a video rental chain that went into administration in 1991. OFC had raised more than £5 million by the end of December last year and cheques continued to roll in over the weeks that followed.

DTI investigators must now try to locate company assets that could be scattered around the world. Inquiries into OFC indicate that links were being established in the Netherlands and Canada.

among other countries, in an effort to raise money. OFC's glossy brochures claimed that the birds were being farmed in Belgium and that the company is represented in Malaysia, Cyprus and Bahrain.

The Official Receiver, appointed provisional liquidator at the request of Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, has been called in to protect assets and financial records until the winding-up petition is heard on May 8.



OFC headquarters in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire

Regulators have been concerned for several months. The Securities and Investment Board (SIB) launched its own investigation but passed the case on to the DTI. The Advertising Standards Authority is investigating OFC advertisements.

OFC's investors are not protected by City regulators because ostriches are not considered financial products. Nor are the investors entitled to payments from the Investors Compensation Scheme should the business collapse.

They now fear that they may lose their money, while some are upset that the DTI has not explained why it has applied for the winding-up order. Andrew Cusack, an OFC investor, said: "I've spoken to several owners who feel that there appears to be no financial problems."

Gary Hollaway, another investor, says he asked Dum & Bradstreet for information on OFC last year, before sending payment. "They told me that the company had no history of problems at the time and was a member of a number of organisations including the Ostrich Sales and Marketing Corporation and the Ostrich Breeding Corporation," Mr Ketchell is a director of both.

Meanwhile, ostrich farming seems set to become a trendy investment, partly because the meat is low in calories and cholesterol. The "mad cow" scare may also make ostrich more popular; some schools are said to be serving ostrich burgers.

Tax rate back to war-time basic

By Janet Bush
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

FROM today, tax is no longer the dirtiest word in the Government's public relations lexicon. After successive years of punitive tax rises under the chancellorships of Norman Lamont and Kenneth Clarke, together representing the largest tax increase in the post-war period, taxes actually fall today.

The Government will be hoping that this long anticipated event will mark a rebirth of its electoral fortunes. Mr

Clarke, in ebullient mood on the by-election campaign in Staffordshire South East last week, said that tax cuts would help create a tide of economic optimism that would sweep the Conservatives back into power. Today's tax cuts were, he said, the first big event for households economically this year.

The highlight of a clutch of tax changes, which the Government claims will help to make the average family £9 a week, or £450 a year, better off, is a 1p reduction in the basic rate of income tax to 24p. This is not only the

first time that the basic rate has fallen since 1988 but it is also the lowest level for the basic rate since the Second World War.

Other changes, announced in the November Budget but which come into force today, include a 5p reduction to 20p for basic rate taxpayers on their savings; above inflation increases in personal allowance; a £1,200 increase in the top rate threshold to £25,500; a rise in the basic allowance by £240 to £3,765 and an increase in the married couples' allowance by £70 to £1,790.

There is also a widening of the lower 20 pence band by £700 to £3,900. The first effects of these adjustments will be felt in next month's pay packets.

But it is not all good news. Taxpayers should watch out for self-assessment, which now comes into effect. They are now under a legal obligation to keep all relevant records to complete their own tax returns. There is a penalty of up to £3,000 for each year of failing to maintain proper records — more than six times what the Government says it is giving back in tax today.

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Magic Jackson and the BTR analysts

Did you happen to notice BTR's 1995 results last month? Not for the first time, the figures outstripped analysts' expectations. Sales in respect of ongoing operations rose 9 per cent to £9 billion, while pre-tax profits increased 6 per cent to £1.5 billion. Earnings rose 10 per cent to £960 million, reflected in a 9 per cent increase in the dividend distribution to 16.075p.

BTR, it may be recalled, is one of the UK's management success stories. It is important to recall this because, every now and again, City analysts lose some of the few marbles they possess, argue that BTR is approaching some form of corporate crossroads and call for the enterprise to be "normalised". The analysts who call for BTR to be normalised are closely related to those who habitually urge GEC to "give back" its cash resources to shareholders. This phrase presupposes that the cash was originally under the direct control of fund managers.

It was in the late Sixties, that Sir

Owen Green emerged as managing director of BTR Leyland Industries, chaired by Sir David Nicholson, and, working alongside Norman Ireland, Don Tapley and the late John Cahill, founded an industrial manufacturing conglomerate currently capitalised at some £12.4 billion. The blueprint heralded the development of BTR's legendary system of financial controls, harnessed to a comprehensive 12-month profit plan.

Talk of a BTR crossroads, from the share-shuffling classes, invariably accompanies the appointment of a new chief executive. Enter, at the turn of the year, Ian Strachan, the former deputy chief executive of RTZ, who was headhunted out of Exxon in 1987. Strachan, the first "outsider" to spearhead BTR, has (wisely) made few pronouncements to date, although the message that accompanied 1995's "prelims" was that the company is set to accelerate its withdrawal from non-manufacturing operations.

Then again, talk of a crossroads was equally rife when Alan Jack-

son, Strachan's predecessor, succeeded Cahill as chief executive in 1991. Under Cahill, BTR had launched a £1 billion takeover bid for Norton, an international abrasives combine based in New England. In the event, Norton opted for the lucrative embraces of a French white knight. This was perceived by analysts as a setback for BTR, as was the company's decision in 1987 to abandon its £1.2 billion bid for Pilkington, the St Helens-based glass multinational. Earlier acquisitions included the fiercely contested bid for Thomas Tilling, an old-fashioned conglomerate, in 1983, followed by the £100 million purchase of Dunlop two years later.

It was Green, as chairman, who wooed Jackson, head of Nylex, BTR's 64 per cent owned Australian offshoot, into the UK hotseat. In the space of 13 years, Jackson, who joined Hopkins Odlum, a minor BTR subsidiary, in 1977, expanded this obscure hose and belting manufacturer into Nylex, a business empire that



MELVYN MARCKUS

was dubbed "Jackson's Juggernaut". The wheels of the juggernaut were amply oiled when Nylex, in partnership with the Pratt enterprise, won a bitter £1.6 billion battle for control of ACI International, a sprawling conglomerate, in 1988. A spiral in pre-tax profits from £527,000 to £825 million brought Nylex, a major contributor to BTR's growth during the late Eighties, a

market capitalisation of some A\$6 billion.

Laden down with Australian Businessman of the Year awards, Jackson, as chief executive of BTR, let it be known that the company intended to focus on industrial manufacturing operations, rather than distribution. He also let it be known that a greater emphasis would be placed on global operations. Several analysts (whose achievements during 1977 to 1990 had not won any noteworthy awards) adopted a sceptical view. It was Jackson who appointed Kathleen O'Donovan, a partner at Ernst & Young, BTR's auditors, finance director in succession to Chris Bull. Even the analysts (given a period of time) applauded Jackson's contribution to petticoat power.

A near-£200 million takeover bid for Rockware, the UK's largest manufacturer of glass containers, complemented BTR Nylex's operations, and Jackson's global strategy, but was not the mega-bid that analysts craved for. That came in

September 1991, when BTR launched a £1.4 billion foray for Hawker Siddeley. A weak defence on the part of Hawker, combined with a tweak in BTR's terms to £1.5 billion, brought landslide acceptance. The acquisition of Hawker significantly enlarged BTR's industrial manufacturing operations and provided a foundation for significant bolt-on expansion. BTR subsequently moved into mainland China, establishing two major glass bottling operations, and underlined its faith in the Asia Pacific region last year with a £2 billion bid for the outstanding 30 per cent of BTR Nylex. This valued the Jackson Juggernaut at close on A\$12 billion.

In the space of six years, BTR's sales have risen 45 per cent to £9.7 billion, while profit before tax and interest has increased 55 per cent to £1.6 billion. Earnings have soared 79 per cent to £960 million, while earnings per share, at 26p, and dividend per share, at 14.69p, are up 41 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively. Acquisition costs be-

tween 1991 and 1995 amounted to some £6.2 billion, compared with disposal proceeds of some £1.5 billion.

Once upon a time, non-executive directors of BTR were made up entirely of former executives. Unfortunately, to my way of thinking, aspects of BTR's culture are changing, witness the appointment of the "outsider" Jeremy Marshall, chief executive of De La Rue, as a non-executive director. When Norman Ireland retires as chairman next month, he will be succeeded by Elwyn Eilledge. Bearing in mind that Eilledge is the former senior partner of Ernst & Young International, this more or less keeps things in the family.

What Strachan must resist is the temptation to bow to calls to "normalise" BTR. Should BTR be "normalised", it would presumably turn into a run-of-the-mill entity with mediocre management. No one could accuse the likes of Green or Jackson of mediocrity, even the analysts that they both had so little time for.

Russians become Fokker's last hope as Koreans quit

By Ross Tieman, Industrial Correspondent

SAMSUNG AEROSPACE, of Korea, has abandoned talks aimed at a takeover of Fokker, the collapsed Dutch regional planemaker. Talks about Fokker with Saab, the Swedish manufacturer of regional turbo-prop aircraft, are also understood to have collapsed.

The withdrawal of the Koreans and the Swedes leaves two Russian planemakers, Tupolev and Yakovlev, as apparently the last hope of rescuing Fokker, which, with 6,600 staff, was one of the leading manufacturing employers in The Netherlands. Bombardier, of Canada, which vies with Aero International Regional, a marketing company embracing British Aerospace, to be the world's leading regional aircraft builder, has already viewed the Fokker books and walked away.

The continued difficulty in finding a rescuer for Fokker is bad news for employees of Short Brothers, the Belfast

subsidiary of Bombardier. Short Brothers has already announced plans to shed 1,000 workers involved in making wings for Fokker's 70-seat F70 jet and 100-seat F100.

A Fokker spokesman said that talks with Tupolev and Yakovlev were continuing. "The receivers still have a number of questions for the Russians to answer," he said. "The receivers also want to see some guarantees on the financial side."

According to Fokker, it may be many weeks before it is clear whether the Russian planemakers will take over blueprints and tooling needed to build Fokker aircraft.

Any purchaser would also have to shoulder liabilities associated with supporting the existing fleet around the world. Chief among these is the role of design authority, ensuring the continued airworthiness of the aircraft to the satisfaction of

aviation authorities. If funding for those costs could be assured, perhaps by the Dutch Government, the business of supplying spares for aircraft in use by airlines and providing maintenance and refurbishment could be profitable.

The Dutch authorities face pressure from several carriers to ensure continuing support for planes built by Fokker, one of the world's oldest aircraft makers. American Airlines, the largest Fokker operator with 75 F100 jets, and USAir, with 55 F28s, are believed to be pressing for a speedy solution that underwrites the long-term future of their fleets.

Residual values of existing Fokker jets, each costing more than \$20 million new, have halved since March 15, when the manufacturer was declared insolvent after Daimler-Benz, the German company that controlled Fokker, refused to finance further losses.



Market cracked: Martin O'Connell, of Field, which makes boxes for the £300 million Easter egg market

Former Jaguar executive takes wheel at Reliant

By Kevin Eason, Motoring Editor

A MAN more used to the luxury of a Jaguar has taken over as the new owner of Reliant, maker of the tiny three-wheeled cars.

Jonathan Heynes, who spent 25 years with Jaguar in a number of executive posts, is understood to have paid less than £500,000 for the company which collapsed last year with debts of about £1.5 million. He is the third owner in as many years as the company has staggered through a series of financial crises.

Mr Heynes said he bought Reliant to make money and planned to step up production as soon as possible. Between 50 and 90 of the workforce of 110 will be brought back to start up assembly lines, completing a bank of orders for 50 cars.

He said: "I cannot reveal exactly what I paid for Reliant, but it is fair to say that it was south of £500,000. It took a lot of careful thought before bidding for the company and I

am going into this with the ambition of making Reliant a profit-making company."

Reliant was one of the last independent British carmakers, but survival has proved tough in a world which has moved on from the days when an economical three-wheeler, which could be driven on a motorcycle licence, was ideal transport for poorer motorists. Attempts to branch out into sports car manufacturing have largely failed since the demise of the Scimitar brand.

Mr Heynes gave no indication whether he intends to revive plans to introduce an electric version of the three-wheeler, but he said: "We have a good back-up of dealerships and they are totally behind us. We already have one dealership in Europe and will be looking to expand further in that area. Reliant produces a good quality product and there is no reason why it shouldn't be successful again."

Oil prices surge with demand

By Carl Mortished

SEVERE cold weather and unusually low stocks caused a surge in demand for oil in the first quarter. The International Energy Agency has pushed up its estimate of OECD oil demand by 200,000 barrels per day to 42 million bpd.

A sharp rise in demand as the US and Western Europe scramble to increase stocks pushed up oil prices, with Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate prices reaching their highest levels since the Gulf War. High demand from OECD countries offset a small decrease in non-OECD countries, leaving estimates of global demand for the second quarter unchanged at 69.9 million bpd.

The IEA is forecasting a sharp upward trend in non-Opec oil supply for the remainder of the year after production problems in the North Sea.

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WOOLWICH DIRECT

Harland is buoyed by reduced loss

HARLAND & WOLFF, the Belfast shipyard group, hopes to break even this year after reducing losses to £6.8 million in 1995 from £16.9 million in the previous 12 months (Nicholas Watt writes).

The company's hopes of moving out of the red were boosted earlier this week when it won a £100 million order from BP to build the world's largest floating oil production vessel.

A spokesman said: "While the financial performance in 1995 was disappointing, the company is confident that the strategy now embarked upon offers the best opportunity to create a profitable future."

An overspend on two vessels that were built for First Olsen Tankers and a shuttle tanker contributed to last year's loss.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.04	1.88
Austria Sch	15.80	15.40
Belgium Fr	49.44	45.14
Canada \$	1.180	2.020
Cyprus Cyp£	0.749	0.894
Denmark Kr	9.34	8.54
Finland Mk	7.84	6.98
France Fr	8.11	7.46
Germany Dm	2.41	2.20
Greece Dr	385.00	363.00
Hong Kong \$	12.45	11.45
Ireland Pt	1.02	0.94
Israel Shk	5.1700	4.5000
Italy Lira	2494.00	2339.00
Japan Yen	177.50	161.50
Malta	0.591	0.526
Netherlands Gld	2.980	2.450
New Zealand \$	2.28	2.16
Norway Kr	10.38	9.58
Portugal Esc	244.00	229.50
S Africa R	6.75	5.96
Spain Pta	166.50	163.50
Sweden Kr	10.78	9.98
Switzerland Fr	1.96	1.78
Turkey Lira	113680	106980
USA \$	1.624	1.494

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading Thursday.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Cola wars

PEPSI is painting the town blue in its head-on battle with Coca-Cola. Why? Because it believes the threat from own-label products has evaporated. It's back to the good days of marketing hype instead of price cutting.

Tomorrow, The Sunday Times looks back at 100 years of cola wars.

Barclays Bank PLC

REVISED RATES OF INTEREST FOR PERSONAL CUSTOMERS

SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

The following rates are current as at 6th April 1996. Rates may vary.	Balance £	Gross Rate pa %	Net Rate pa %
<i>Annual income option</i>			
BARCLAYS SELECT A 90 day notice account for savings of £2,000 or more. Interest is paid annually or monthly.	£100,000+	4.90	3.92
	£50,000+	4.70	3.76
	£25,000+	4.45	3.56
	£10,000+	4.40	3.52
<i>Quarterly income option</i>			
CAPITAL ADVANTAGE ACCOUNT A one month notice account for savings of £2,000 or more. Interest is paid quarterly or monthly.	£100,000+	4.15	3.32
	£50,000+	3.95	3.16
	£25,000+	3.80	3.04
	£10,000+	3.70	2.96
<i>Quarterly income option</i>			
HIGHER RATE DEPOSIT ACCOUNT An instant access account for savings of £100 or more. Interest is paid quarterly or monthly.	£25,000+	3.25	2.68
	£10,000+	3.25	2.60
	£5,000+	3.10	2.48
	£1,000+	3.00	2.40
<i>Quarterly income option</i>			
PRIME ACCOUNT A high interest cheque account for balances of £1,000 or more. Interest is paid quarterly.	£25,000+	2.10	1.68
	£10,000+	2.10	1.68
	£5,000+	2.10	1.68
	£1,000+	2.10	1.68
<i>Quarterly income option</i>			
BARCLAYS TESSA A tax exempt savings account, for those aged 18 and over. Minimum opening balance £25. Interest is paid annually.	£25,000+	6.00*	TAX-FREE
	£10,000+	6.00*	TAX-FREE
	£5,000+	6.00*	TAX-FREE
	£1,000+	6.00*	TAX-FREE
<i>Quarterly income option</i>			
SEVEN DAY DEPOSIT ACCOUNT A seven day notice account which can be opened with £1. Interest is paid half-yearly.	£1+	0.50	0.40
	£1+	0.50	0.40
	£1+	0.50	0.40
	£1+	0.50	0.40
<i>Quarterly income option</i>			
JUNIOR BARCLAYPLUS & BARCLAYPLUS Instant access accounts for children and young people up to 16 years of age. Cash dispenser card for people aged 11 years and over. Interest is paid quarterly.	£1+	3.50	2.80
	£1+	3.50	2.80
	£1+	3.50	2.80
	£1+	3.50	2.80

CURRENT ACCOUNT

THE BARCLAYS BANK ACCOUNT	Balance £	Gross Rate pa %	Net Rate pa %
The interest bearing personal current account. Credit interest is paid quarterly.	£1+	0.30	0.24

STUDENT ACCOUNTS

STUDENT ACCOUNT - FURTHER EDUCATION	Balance £	Gross Rate pa %	Net Rate pa %
A special version of the Barclays Bank Account for students taking a full-time degree (or equivalent) course. Credit interest is paid quarterly.	£1+	3.50	2.80
STUDENT ACCOUNT - HIGHER EDUCATION	Balance £	Gross Rate pa %	Net Rate pa %
A special version of the Barclays Bank Account for students taking a full-time degree (or equivalent) course. Credit interest is paid quarterly.	£1+	2.00	1.60

GROSS RATE - Interest is payable gross to non-taxpayers or subject to the required certification of the rate payable after the deduction of lower rate tax (which may be reclaimed by non-taxpayers). Actual Tax Deduction Scheme for Interest (TDS) may vary, the net rate is given for illustration only and has been rounded to two decimal places. This indicates the interest is exempt from income tax, provided all TESSA conditions are met. Full details available on request.

TAX-FREE - Interest is payable gross to non-taxpayers or subject to the required certification of the rate payable after the deduction of lower rate tax (which may be reclaimed by non-taxpayers). Actual Tax Deduction Scheme for Interest (TDS) may vary, the net rate is given for illustration only and has been rounded to two decimal places. This indicates the interest is exempt from income tax, provided all TESSA conditions are met. Full details available on request.

BARCLAYS

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A WORKING WEEK FOR: RODGER BROAD

The man charged with giving BT's line

As head of corporate sponsorship and publicity
Rodger Broad gives money away, but it is
no cushy number, as Eric Reguly discovered

Monday The poster depicts an elongated tongue about to lick a prickly cactus, and Rodger Broad, BT's head of corporate sponsorship and publicity, doesn't approve. The connotation, he thinks, is overtly sexual.

Tuesday Not that there's anything wrong with such a thing, it's just that he needs convincing that it's relevant in this case. The poster is an early design for 1997's "BT National Connections", a collaboration between BT and the Royal National Theatre in which the two commission authors to write plays for the country's 200 youth theatres. The effort culminates in the production of the top works at a five-day summer festival at the National.

Wednesday Suzy Graham-Adriani, producer of youth theatre for the National, and Broad are discussing the poster's design in a drab conference room at BT headquarters near St Paul's. "What's the logic behind the tongue?" Broad asks.

Thursday It's a fantasy, Graham-Adriani says. "A tongue licking a cactus is something daring. We tried every other body part, including a bum, and it didn't work."

Friday Broad has another idea. "What about a kiss? With puckered lips. It suggests warmth and comfort."

Graham-Adriani does not appear entirely convinced, but agrees to have the artist take a crack at the lips concept. Broad is happy. BT is, after all, a good clean family company and elongated tongues don't quite fit the bill.

Rodger Broad is a man of phenomenal energy. The BT National Connections meeting was one of half a dozen meetings he either chaired or attended that day with various arts and charities groups eager, indeed desperate, for the company's financial backing.

BT is one of the largest corporate donors in the land, with a budget of £15 million, equivalent to about half a per cent of the company's domestic annual pre-tax profits. Community and environmental projects, such as swimathons for children's aid and cleaning up rubbish dumps, consume the bulk of that amount, leaving some £1.8 million for arts sponsorships, the really fun bits. Although £1.8 million does not seem enormous, it's enough to make BT the leading non-lottery arts sponsor. But BT is hardly a corporate Mother

Teresa. It gives nothing away unless there's something in it for BT. The company's name and logo are featured prominently in all sponsorship material, and Broad likes to ensure that he is seen or heard in any associated media coverage. He says: "The days when any company could just give away money without respect to its shareholders are gone. There's a definite trend away from pure charity and toward the idea of mutual benefit for both sides."

BT's goal, one that has become increasingly important as the telecoms market becomes more competitive, is to recruit the next generation of customers. That's why most of the arts sponsorships are directed at young people.

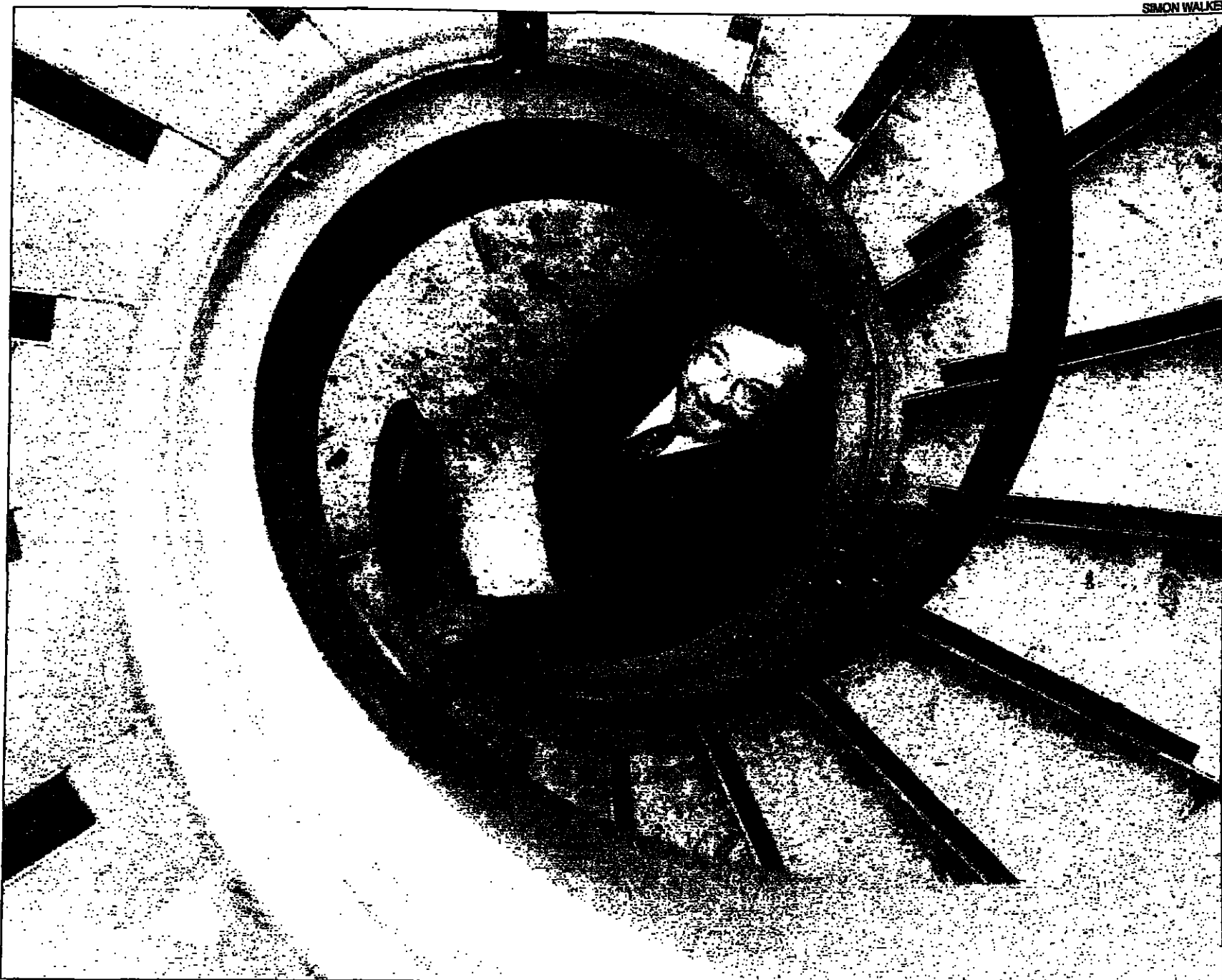
The same concept has been used effectively, for example, by Pepsi and Coca-Cola. With Coke dominating the market, Pepsi's advertising campaigns have been directed at ever younger audiences. The banks are following suit. Research has shown that Britons are loath to change banks. Get them young and you've got a customer for life. Says Broad: "This is all a considered approach to future customers. You develop a reputation that differentiates yourself from your competitors."

Broad, 50, is an unlikely combination of consummate company "lifer", as he puts it, and eccentric. Bearded, 6ft 3in and 16½ stone, he is a bear of a man who would look at home riding a Harley-Davidson into the American sunset. In fact, his passion is big motorcycles and his dream is to ditch the suit and tour the US on a monster machine, with Edit, his German-born wife, on the back.

He was born and raised in London and spent his early years owning, fixing and racing motorcycles, writing about them in *Motorcycle Gazette*, and playing rugby. Both careers took a turn for the worse after racing and rugby accidents left him with a fractured hip and damaged knees; he has had three knee operations. His last motorcycle race was at the age of 25, although he still roams around on his Honda 750 and a 1959 BSA Gold Star 350. He also finds time to referee rugby games and act as a steward at motorcycle races.

After being sidelined by injuries, he became an electrical engineer at a company whose name he can't even remember. At the age of 30, he joined BT and has been there ever since. Engineering, however, was not him.

His dream is to ditch the suit and tour the US on a monster motorbike



Rodger Broad's 14-hour working day typically starts at 6am, when the only distraction is the squawking of George, his bilingual African grey parrot

Gregarious and plain-speaking, he gravitated towards the public relations side of the business and worked his way up through the ranks. Before his appointment as sponsorship manager five years ago, he was head of public relations in BT's Thamesway district. Broad is a natural PR man. He says: "I'm English, my wife is German and our daughters are called Michele and Nicole. Given the different nationalities, the only way to prevent a major battle with the children's names was to give them French names. I guess that was the PR in me."

He engenders trust partly because he does not ooze the oily charm of some of his City counterparts. He tends to say what's on his mind and he doesn't look the part. On the day of his meeting with the National Theatre, he was wearing a blue, pin-striped suit offset by bright yellow and blue tie that would not disgrace a bookie's clerk.

More importantly, Broad is no artistic snob. If he were, BT's sponsorship programme might be limited to events at the Royal Albert Hall. Peter Thompson, a theatre and arts publicist who has done some work with Broad, says: "He is not at all elitist. His tastes go from pop groups to ballet. He's got teenage kids, so he's very much in tune with what interests younger people."

Although his job consumes 14 hours of his day, Broad will not let it dominate his life. He loves gardening and animals. In the pet world, his latest affections are two hamsters, a Burmese blue cat called Columbus and an African grey parrot called George. The bird is bilingual. "My wife speaks to it in German. I'll sing *O Tannenbaum* in German and I taught it to say 'Hello Rodger, my name is George.'"

Broad typically begins work at 6am at his home in Guildford, when the squawking George is the only distraction. The first few hours are spent going through faxes and files, and the rest of the day is a flurry of taxis and meetings and receptions.

During a grey Thursday in late March, his first meeting was at GMTV, which sponsors the "Get Up & Give Appeal" for

charities such as the Down's Syndrome Association, the National Schizophrenia Fellowship and the Lady Hoare Trust for Physically Disabled Children. BT's role is not directly financial in this case; it is to provide enough toll-free phone lines so that viewers who want to make donations are not put on hold at their own expense.

Broad agrees that 270 technical people will be made available in the BT Tower to ensure a smooth operation. But he draws the line at a GMTV proposal to have Sir Iain Vallance, BT's chairman, take part in a related publicity stunt. It would involve celebrities trying to land golf balls on a small bit of green surrounded by water. "Iain doesn't play golf; he plays piano," Broad says.

In the early afternoon, Broad is back at BT's headquarters, where he is chairing a meeting for BT Dance 96. The event, the first of its kind, conducts a countrywide search for 150 young amateur dancers. The 12 best dance groups, including the Peebles Youth Dance from Dalkeith, Lothian, and Riabinoushka from Broadstairs, Kent, strutted their stuff at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London last Sunday. BT wrote a cheque for £80,000 for the event.

Broad and the BT Dance 96 officials

were primarily concerned about media coverage, and Broad extols the virtues of the tabloid press because they are more likely than the broadsheets to run big colour pictures. At one point, someone suggests getting a burger chain to cater for the event. The BSE scare ensures that the idea is quickly dropped.

Then it is straight into the National Theatre meeting and the question of the elongated tongue. It's mid-afternoon and Broad still has several meetings to go. On any given day, he will see organisers from BT Voices for Hospices, BT Bursaries for Young Musicians, the BT Celebration Series and the BT Biennial, among other sponsorships.

Broad says he loves the job but admits that the 14-hour days are starting to catch up with him. Although he has no immediate plans to bale out, he's thinking about another career. "I think in any high-pressure job, you need to consider the next step to save burning out," he says. "It's called self-preservation."

One option is to work as an independent consultant for one or several of the organisations in his sponsorship portfolio. What he really wants to do, though, is leave it all behind for a while. "I'd love to get another motorcycle and I'd love to tour the States with it. My wife would come. She is totally supportive of my job, but might be relieved if I didn't have to do it any more."

Bank balances business with a duty to the past

Sara McConnell finds treasures at
Coutts Bank's 'customer oubliette'

What do you do with a collection of seven teeth? Or a packet of hair? If you are Coutts Bank, you keep them carefully in a vault, along with 600 other more or less valuable treasures deposited at the bank and forgotten by long-dead customers. While other banks lose patience after a hundred years or so and start selling off the unclaimed contents of their strongrooms, Coutts cannot bring itself to do likewise.

It believes the contents of its "customer oubliette", as the collection is known, are not its to sell. Instead, its archivists make strenuous attempts to trace any surviving relatives, by trawling through records at St Catherine's House and advertising in *The Times*. Tracey Earl, Coutts archivist, says: "We will try any avenue."

But many of the treasures date from the 18th century, soon after Coutts was founded as one of the first private

banks. Often they belonged to wealthy merchants working in the expanding trading markets of India or the New World. They sent back silver, jewellery, snuff boxes, papers detailing the intricate workings of their trading companies, letters, medals and uniforms to be taken into the safekeeping of Thomas Coutts, the bank's senior partner and personal friend of many of his customers. Two hundred years later, they are still safe, carefully labelled and wrapped in tissue paper. But the owners died intestate, or they had daughters who married foreigners, making them virtually impossible for the bank to trace.

This is not to say that the archivists know nothing about the lives of the people whose treasures they still

guard. The teeth remain a mystery, admits Ms Earl. But the wealthy, literate men and women who banked with Coutts were prolific letter writers and diary keepers.

One of the most thorough diarists was the original owner of the 1812 guitar inlaid with mother-of-pearl, which is now one of the jewels in the crown of the collection. Christopher d'Monte was the son of a wealthy merchant in Madras, south India, who had connections with Coutts.

After an English education, he defied his father, who wanted him to work in the family business, and set off on a grand tour of Europe in 1815, described in detail in his diary. On his travels through the salons and ballrooms of Europe, he met

Giuliani, the Italian composer and guitarist, who made him a present of the guitar now in Coutts's possession. But he fell ill in Vienna and never made it back to England, dying penniless in Germany. All his possessions, including the guitar and his diary (which ironically includes long lists of cures for various illnesses), were sent back to Coutts. His father never contacted Coutts to ask for his son's belongings back.

Not all Coutts's customers ran their affairs in the way the bank would have liked. Some men-about-town ran up such huge bills with tradesmen that they had to pledge their possessions to settle their debts. Coutts has traced the descendants of the owner of a heavy gold and enamel snuff box worth about £40,000 but found they had no claim on it because it was pledged to the original owner's draper. Others left sheaves of bills but history does not relate whether they were ever paid.

Sir Richard Strachan, a hero of the Battle of Trafalgar and holder of the Order of the Bath, ran up bills with carriage-makers, stay-makers, chimney sweeps for his London house and a demand for £10 from "Mr Mash the potato man".

Occasionally, some of the contents of the customer oubliette see the light of day in exhibitions. Some of the papers relating to the French Royal Family have been sent to Paris, while others have gone to University College London.

But the remainder still await collection in concrete strongrooms in the Strand and in Docklands on the Thames, down which the original owners of the treasures set sail for the four corners of the world.



The £40,000 snuff box, far right, with other items from the Coutts Bank collection

Annual figures 1995

excellent result 1995:
net profit + 15% to NLG 2,649 million
dividend + 11% to NLG 4.15

(in millions of guilders, except for amounts per share)	1995	1994	%
Result before taxation:			
- insurance operations	2,186	1,834	14.8
- banking operations	1,752	1,509	16.1
Net profit	2,649	2,302	15.1
Profit per ordinary share	9.68	8.71	10.2
Dividend per ordinary share	4.15	3.74	11.0
Total assets	396,264	353,667	12.0
Shareholders' equity	23,777	21,758	9.3

- ING Group achieved an excellent result for 1995. Both the insurance and the banking results developed favourably.
- In insurance, life profit showed a growth of 15.1% to NLG 1,097 million. Non-life profit increased by 14.9% to NLG 339 million.
- In banking, the interest result decreased slightly to NLG 6,258 million (-0.5%). Due to the acquisition of Barings, commission income showed a strong increase of 44.7% to NLG 1,980 million. The result from financial transactions improved very substantially compared to the low level for 1994, from NLG 37 million to NLG 977 million.
- Compared to the end of 1994, shareholders' equity increased by NLG 2.0 billion to NLG 23.8 billion. Shareholders' equity per share rose from NLG 79.67 at the end of 1994 to NLG 83.38 at the end of 1995 (+4.7%).
- A proposal for a share split will be submitted to the General Meeting of Shareholders. If this proposal is approved, the nominal value of the ordinary shares of ING will be changed from NLG 2.50 to NLG 1.00 as of 3 June 1996.
- ING Group also intends to apply for a listing on the New York Stock Exchange in the course of 1997.
- The Executive Board faces the future with confidence, but considers it premature to make a profit forecast for 1996 at this stage.

ING GROUP

Internet: <http://www.ing.nl>

The annual report appears on 18 April 1996 and can be obtained at the following address: ING Group, P.O. Box 810, 1000 AV Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Telephone: (+31) 20 541 54 71, fax: (+31) 20 541 54 51.



TROUBLED WATER 31

Theft takes wind out of sailors' sails

WEEKEND MONEY

PENSIONS 32

How to choose the best paying plans



Easter home seekers get cracking

Sara McConnell on how vital signs differ at traditionally one of the busiest times of year

House prices across Britain are rising so sharply that they have already overshot annual targets, analysts said this week. Estate agents and lenders now have high hopes that this Easter weekend, traditionally one of the busiest times of year for housebuying, will help to continue the longest sustained recovery since the housing slump began.

At the start of the year, the Halifax, the largest lender, predicted an average 2 per cent rise in house prices across the country in 1996. That cautious analysis was shared by others, such as NatWest. However, the Halifax this week admitted that its prediction may have been too downbeat, as it announced that prices had risen by 1.2 per cent last month and by 1.7 per cent since last February. This is the eighth rise in succession. Ian Shepherdson, housing analyst with HSBC, says prices this year have risen 2.6 per cent above the average in the final quarter of last year. "The signs are all there for a recovery. The consensus forecast in January was a 2 per cent rise over the year. We have already hit this target."

Many homeowners, however, still see scant evidence of price rises. National averages mask big differences between and within regions, according

to figures issued this week by NatWest. As the graphic shows, Northern Ireland is expected to continue to outpace other regions this year, while movement in prices in the North West and Wales will scarcely be perceptible.

But do these predictions match up with the experiences of estate agents in the front line in the regions?

□ Northern Ireland: Anielm Brankin, of Brankin Estates, Portrush, Co Antrim, said: "Some areas have appreciated, but we still have a lot of difficulties particularly lack of employment. The peace process may have had some effect, but

Home income plans 30

there is a lot of hype. We are in a tourist area, so we have a lot of second homes. I am getting quite a lot of enquiries. They used to be mostly from mainland Britain, but I'm getting more from North America now. I suppose a 6 per cent to 8 per cent rise in prices could be right. But I've heard some ridiculous figures."

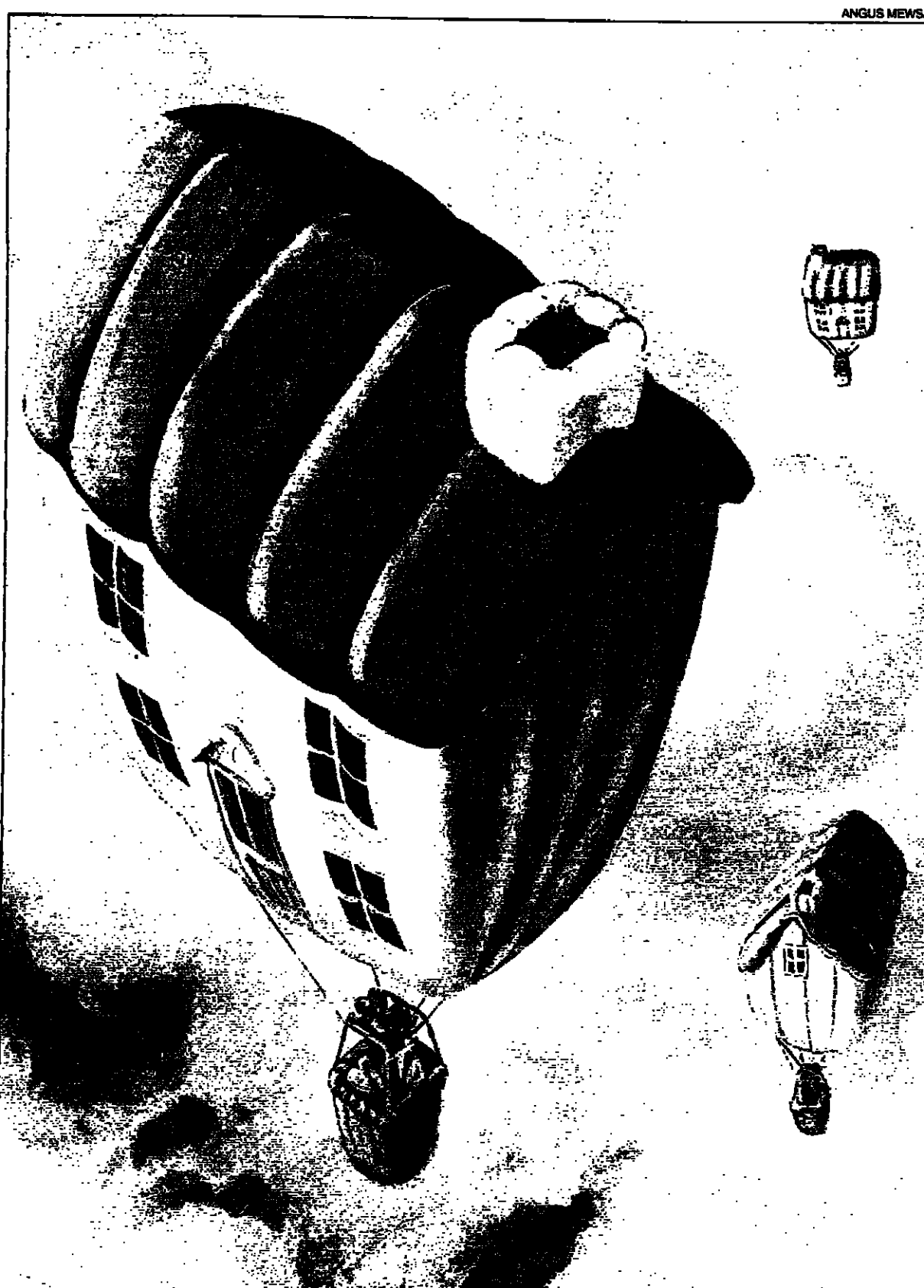
□ South West: Paul Hodgson, of Paul Properties, of Topsham, Devon, said: "I would say prices are rising by more than 3 per cent. Interest is much higher. We can get

much nearer to the full price now. If a property costs £70,000 to £140,000, we are seeing a £1,000 to £2,000 drop between asking price and offer price. It used to be £5,000 or even £10,000. We are seeing people who were renting start to buy. There are some 70s and 80s estate houses in and around Exeter which are difficult to move. If you have eight houses for sale, the one you're selling has to stand out."

□ West Midlands: Simon Parmar, of Simon Andrew Estate Agents, Birmingham, said: "March is normally the first month of activity. We are starting to see more instructions, although it is too early to say if this will filter through into sales. I'm more optimistic than this time last year. Unfortunately we're still getting some sellers being silly about property [and demanding too high a price]. Most of our flats are in the first time buyer market, at between £30,000 and £50,000. We are seeing more people interested."

□ North West: Gary Denholm, of Denholm Estate Agents, Liverpool, says: "I would say prices are generally stable... In the city centre, we are mostly talking about first-time buyer terraced houses. They sell for less than they did this time last year. Speculators are buying them up to let to students, because they're near the university. This tends to push the prices down. They're not doing them up to sell them on - the bottom has fallen out of the market for that. On more upmarket houses, up to £80,000 or £90,000, there is movement and we are getting better prices, although prices are slightly down overall."

Details, page 28



Fixed-rate mortgage price rise

Most borrowers will have to pay an average of 0.5 per cent more for fixed-rate loans after this week. Britain's leading lenders have withdrawn their existing two, three and five-year fixed rates and replaced them with more expensive ones as part of a restructuring of their mortgage ranges (Sara McConnell writes).

Lenders blame the rising cost of borrowing money in the wholesale markets for the higher rates. Fixed rate loans are funded by lenders borrowing tranches of money from the wholesale markets which they then sell on to borrowers.

The Halifax has raised most of its fixed rates for both first time buyers and existing borrowers. But at the same time it has sweetened the pill by increasing its maximum cashback from £6,000 to £10,000 and raised its contribution to first time buyers' legal fees from £300 to £500. The society has introduced a complex range of incentives intended to reward loyal customers.

The Nationwide has also raised three and five-year fixed rates for borrowers moving house. But those remortgaging will actually see three and five-year fixed rates fall by around 0.3 per cent.

Mortgage brokers dismissed fears that higher fixed rates could slow a housing market recovery. They say many borrowers are more interested in the large discounts available on variable rates and in short-term fixed rates than in locking themselves into a longer-term fixed rate.

Ian Darby, marketing director at John Charcol, says: "People are going for short-term discounts and fixed rates. There is now a lack of fear about the markets and not much concern that interest rates might go up."

"It's jam today really. And lenders prefer discounts to fixed rates because they are in control of their margins on discounts."

Weekend Money is this week edited by Marianne Curphey

Rock solid on mutuality

BUILDING societies have responded to Northern Rock's plans to convert to a bank by reiterating their commitment to mutuality. Bradford & Bingley claimed Northern Rock's change of heart helped its own commercial position, while industry observers described Northern Rock's decision as "a blow to the building society movement". Northern Rock decided to give up its mutual status after an approach from JP Morgan, the investment bank, suggested a move to help the society to retain its independence and make it less attractive to predators. The Alliance & Leicester, the Woolwich and the Halifax have announced flotation plans.

Details, page 28

"I checked out the usual high street names.

I couldn't see 8.0% tax-free anywhere."



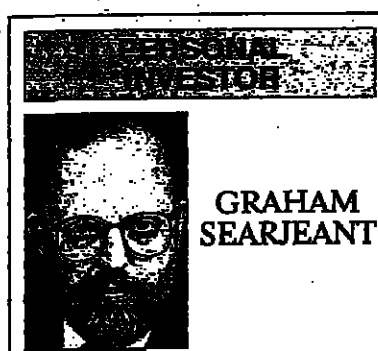
Remaking Humpty Dumpty

When you quake before the thought of Spring cleaning, spare a thought for the London Stock Exchange, which probably has more dust-gathering baggage than any other City institution. John Kemp-Welch, the exchange's reluctant chairman, is stuck in the middle of domestic technical and trading revolutions, assailed by foreign competitors and regulators and without a chief executive, let alone a broom.

In all this, individual investors hardly seem to have been considered. The Bank of England delivered a simplified Crest electronic settlement system quickly by leaving out private investors. But they are being buffeted in the wash. Many have been driven into nominee accounts that break the link between company and investor, despite well-meaning formulae to bridge the gap. The Exchange's account, beloved of small speculators who greased its creakier parts, was abandoned without ceremony.

The trading revolution seems to revolve entirely round competing professional interests. The present system allows firms to be both brokers, who act for customers, and market-makers, the wholesalers who guarantee to take two-way markets in all shares on their own account. Brokers all share on the market-makers, but the latter drive the market through prices quoted publicly on screens.

A coalition of interests has long hated this regime. They finally persuaded the Exchange to prefer a system where prices are driven directly by the weight of buying and selling orders - but not



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

yet and initially only for the top shares that make up the FT-SE 100 index.

Quote-driven market-making is not used in other world markets, but works well on NASDAQ, an American exchange that has outgrown its original small company role. Global securities groups do not like operating a different system in London. Second-rank market-makers reckon they could do better if they did not have to put up the capital needed to hold stocks of shares. The futures exchange wants to base its contracts on prices of actual deals rather than quotes. And big brokers want to grab more commission at the expense of market-makers' buy/sell margins.

As with Crest, ignored private investors will feel the effects. The market-making system has a practical flaw. Prices quoted to all-comers are rarely the best obtainable. So a cheap automated dealing service trading for clients at the "green strip", the best quoted price, may not do best for its clients on any but

small deals. A personal private client broker, who charges more, will usually negotiate a better price. This hinders low-cost US-style private investor services in Britain.

Margins are not the only issue. The smaller the company, the less often it is traded and the more investors rely on wholesalers to maintain a liquid market. Otherwise you might not be able to buy and sell when you want. And the smaller the stock, the more of the trades are made by small investors. If investors are intimately concerned, however, they lack a powerful voice. There should be some way to adjust the quote-driven system to show keener public prices to small investors. Automated broking systems could then trade at the "green strip". But this ideal seems unrealistic.

Private investors would probably be better off if quoted companies were split into three groups. The big companies, whose shares are traded internationally on the conventional order-driven system, plus two local markets: the growing alternative investment market plus a new national market in companies outside the top 250, usually worth less than £300 million. These would be traded, like Nasdaq, via wholesalers.

Who knows whether these would come under the umbrella of the London Stock Exchange. Reform is always likely to fail if its starts with the wrong motives. If the exchange and regulators put private investors, their most numerous clients, first, they would come up with better answers for all.

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Richard Thomson meets America's 'investment biker'



Go your own way: Jim Rogers believes in investors being free spirits, acting on their own research rather than relying on the wisdom of Wall Street analysts and City dealers

Get on your bike and let the money roll in

With the US stock market in chaos, bouncing up and down like a manic trampolinist, it is natural for self-respecting investors to have the jitters. Even if your money is not in the US itself, what happens there will eventually effect the markets you have invested in. If you take a straw-poll of analysts on Wall Street, you may not end up much the wiser. Their job, after all, is to sell you stocks and they have a vested interest in the market moving ever upwards.

There are probably few better sources of wisdom, however, than Jim Rogers, whose motto is never talk to Wall Street (or City) analysts if you can help it. The secret of getting rich from investing, in his opinion, is to go your own way, do your own research and make up your own mind. As an investment principle, it has certainly worked for him. Mr Rogers is the author of *Investment Biker*, an account of a journey around the world by motorbike in which he expounds his thoughts on investing and world markets.

In the 1970s he was the other half of the team that helped the famed George Soros start up as a fund manager. Soros was the trader, Rogers handled the research. Between 1969, when they set up, and 1980 they managed a gain of 3,365 per

cent while the US market as measured by the Standard & Poor's composite index rose a mere 47 points. In 1980 Mr Rogers, having made his fortune, bailed out and left Soros to continue on his own.

Mr Rogers has not yet pulled his money out of the US stock market this year but his view is gloomy. "Of course I'm worried," he says. "Anyone older than about 26 would be in these conditions."

One of his basic rules of investing is that markets always go higher than they should before they fall. "It's like the gold rush. When people see a good thing they rush in and push prices up too far. One of the factors pushing up the US market at present is the sheer volume of private investor money flowing into mutual funds (the US equivalent of unit trusts) and into indexed funds in particular. "About 80 per cent of all the money that has ever flowed into

mutual funds has come in over the last eight years," says Mr Rogers. That has fuelled the market's relentless rise.

So are US stocks overvalued? "The market has been going up for five and a half years - we've never had such a prolonged bull phase in stock market history without a major correction. Most Americans now think this is the norm, but in fact it's an aberration." On most measures, such as the ratio of dividends to earnings, now the highest it has ever been, the market is overheated. Which leads to another of Mr Rogers' principles. "Brokers tell you that stocks will keep going up because it is different this time. Never believe this. It is never different." Which means there has to be a correction.

Although timing is always hard to predict, he believes the fall may come sometime around August and will be followed by a long slow decline in

share prices. "It could be a decline of 13 or 18 or over 20 per cent. It depends how investors react."

If he is right, clever investors will be left to fall back on their own devices and to look for opportunities that no one else has spotted - a technique from which Mr Rogers has benefited for years. One of his biggest coups came in 1984 when he saw that the Austrians were about to offer investment incentives in their capital markets and also spotted that the Austrian stock market languished at absurdly low levels.

It was so quiet that when Mr Rogers asked a large Austrian bank how he could invest in the market, the bank didn't even know it existed. Realising he was ahead of the game, he bought shares in all the major Austrian companies he could lay his hands on. Presently, the Government opened up its mar-

kets, foreign investors flooded in and Mr Rogers doubled his money in 18 months. This is typical of his style. If an idea is a good one, back it by buying shares across the board in the country or industrial sector you have targeted. In the case of individual companies, Mr Rogers looks for undervalued stock like everyone else, but unlike many investors he also needs to see some reason for change that will soon push the share price upwards. Without that, the shares may not be a particularly good buy.

Another of his investment principles is to stay liquid, which is why he does not buy land. Land can sometimes be impossible to sell when you need to sell it, whereas shares can always be sold at a price.

So if stock markets are about to fall, where is the best hiding place? Mr Rogers is bullish about the stock markets of Ireland and France, but his latest idea is natural resources. Over the last ten years, raw material prices have been low while financial assets have boomed but that may be about to go into reverse. The solution: buy mining companies such as RTZ, and countries with natural resources such as Chile, Australia, Botswana, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. "I'd even invest in Iran if US citizens were allowed to," he says. Talk about backing a hunch.

QUESTION OF MONEY

Leaseholders wait for their rights to be strengthened

MPs have been hammering out amendments to the Housing Bill this week to help to strengthen the rights of long leaseholders against unscrupulous freeholders. John Gummer, Environment Secretary, promised in January to reinforce leaseholders' rights. But Labour has denounced the whole leasehold system as "feudal" and pledged fundamental reform if it is returned to government. So how does leasehold work, and what has gone wrong?

Q Why do people buy leasehold properties if they cause such problems?

A Most flatowners have no choice. The majority of flats are leasehold, mainly for historical reasons. A number of houses are also leasehold, particularly in London. Freehold flats are usually unmanageable because there are no formal arrangements for maintaining the communal areas of the block, which worries lenders. Confusingly, freehold is not the same as having a share of the freehold.

Q So how do leaseholds work?

A Under the leasehold system, the actual building and the ground it stands on is owned by a freeholder, who in turn sells the flat or house on long leases. Leasehold does not mean cheap: people pay tens of thousands of pounds for leasehold properties. The freeholder is responsible for managing the property and for maintaining, repairing and insuring it. But the leaseholders have to pay the bills. Critics of the system argue that it works mainly to the advantage of the freeholder because leaseholders are paying to maintain a building which will revert to the freeholder at the end of the lease term, giving him a valuable asset. Meanwhile, leaseholders have been living in a depreciating asset for years because leases lose value as they get shorter.

Q But can't leaseholders buy the freehold off the landlord?

A Yes, but only if they satisfy a number of complex conditions. New Labour amendments will extend the right to enfranchise to some who did not qualify before. Some landlords have made it difficult for leaseholders to buy, including flouting laws that give leaseholders first refusal when a landlord wants to sell a freehold. Government amendments to the Housing Bill will stop landlords splitting freeholds to avoid selling to leaseholders and will make it a criminal offence not to offer leaseholders the freehold first. Flatowners who succeed in buying normally form a management company through which they own a share of the freehold and which gives them collective responsibility for repairs. This makes the flats mortgageable.

Q What happens to the people who cannot or do not want to buy their freehold?

A They are at the mercy of the freeholder. This may be alright if the landlord is good. But many have found themselves facing huge service charge bills and threats that their leases will be forfeited if they refuse to pay. They can only exercise their rights through the courts. A Labour clause added to the Bill this week will give tenants the right to manage their own properties through a management company, which should give them control over service charge bills. Government amendments stop short of this but would allow service charge disputes to be heard before a leasehold valuation tribunal (LVT) which does not award costs. Landlords will not be able to threaten forfeiture of leases in service charge disputes until the LVT has ruled the charges are reasonable.

SARA MCCONNELL

Surprise as Northern rocks the mutual boat

Northern Rock's announcement this week that it intends to abandon its mutual status and float on the stockmarket has been greeted with horror by the few remaining societies in the top twenty with any commitment to mutuality. The society's 750,000 savers and 250,000 borrowers will benefit from a share bonanza which could be worth around £1,000 per member when the society floats next year. Anyone who had an account with a balance of at least £50 by close of business on April 2 will benefit from the free shares. However, in order to qualify, the account must be topped up to at least £100 by the end of the year. Northern Rock's chairman, Robert Dickinson, will announce details of

how the shares will be allocated closer to the conversion date. The society is also giving those who are not eligible to vote on the conversion and not eligible for the free shares (children and those with balances of less than £100 at the end of this year) a cash bonus. Northern Rock has followed the path to conversion taken by the Woolwich, Alliance & Leicester, Halifax and National Provincial. However, these latter societies clearly signalled they were contemplating conversion, while Northern Rock recently announced a package of measures aimed at rewarding long-term membership. The society has always maintained that it wished to remain independent and, until recently, stressed its commitment to mutu-

Caroline Merrell on trade reaction to the flotation plan

ality. The bigger societies claim that conversion will allow them to offer more services to their client base. Northern Rock claims the opposite. It wants to offer the same savings and mortgage products to its clients, but more cheaply. The society also announced that it planned to put 5 per cent of its profits into a charity called the Northern Rock Foundation, which would pay money to charitable causes.

Rob Thomas, UBS building society analyst, said: "It is a very unexpected move,

and a blow to the building society movement. It reveals the pressures building societies are under." Some in the building society world see the plan as a defensive action, in response to the possibility of a hostile takeover by another society or quoted company. If the society manages to go down the conversion route alone, it cannot itself be taken over by another organisation for five years. However, Northern Rock's announcement could flush out a bidder before the flotation can be voted through. Members would then have to choose which was the best option.

Those societies which claim commitment to staying mutual are keen to reiterate this commitment. Nationwide, which recently

announced a series of measures to enhance products for both its savers and borrowers, said it had no plans to follow Northern Rock. It said it had had a favourable reaction from members to its package of measures. Bradford & Bingley, another staunch supporter of mutuality, claimed Northern Rock's change of heart helped its own commercial position.

John Wrigglesworth, Bradford & Bingley spokesman, said: "Being a mutual continues to be a huge advantage. You do not have to pay out dividends to shareholders. We have proved right in being different. We were one of the few societies which did not buy estate agents. If you are a lemming you just fall off a cliff."



Dickinson: Elbn float

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Mutuals on the bounty

Watching the events of the last year, it is hard not to conclude that building societies speak with forked tongue. They loudly proclaim undying commitment to mutualism but secretly seem to fantasise about a fling with flotation.

This week, Northern Rock became the latest society to give into temptation and begin the process of becoming a bank, following the Alliance & Leicester, the Woolwich, the Halifax, and the National & Provincial.

The society claims that it will be able to retain its independence and be less attractive to potential predators. But there is a strong possibility that an outside



COMMENT

MARIANNE CURPHEY
Personal Finance
Writer

bidding will step in. As expected, the mutuals left behind lined up to reiterate their belief in the value of remaining as building societies.

Their polite cartel, however, seems doomed as, one by one, they leave the club. The converting societies' members — its savers and borrowers — have put up little resistance. As the Alliance & Leicester

observed: "People love mutualism, but not as much as a cheque for £600."

So who is next? This week, the Bristol & West conceded that it was not as committed to mutualism as it had been once. The Bradford & Bingley, Chelsea, Skipton, Birmingham Midshires, and Yorkshire building societies have all pledged to stay

as they are but outside pressures could eventually force a change of heart.

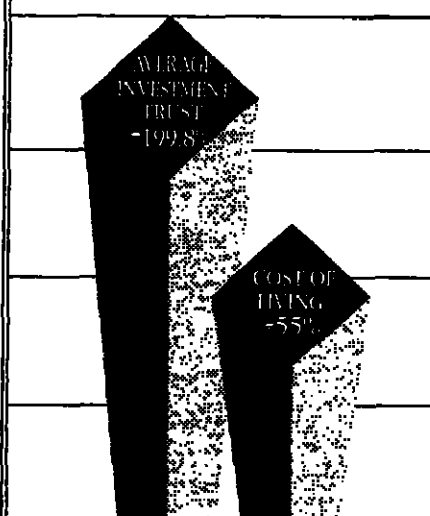
Meanwhile, anyone with a few hundred pounds to spare can still gamble on the remaining societies converting by opening a share account with them and hoping for a payout.

Peter Robinson, the dismissed chief executive of the Woolwich, famously accused such people of being "carpet-baggers".

But the stock market has traditionally rewarded opportunists, and if some building societies are content to move the goalposts without warning, they can hardly complain when ordinary investors join in and start to play their own game.

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JOHN
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Ostrich investors are baffled

Birds in the hand may be worthless

The news that the Ostrich Farming Corporation (OFC) is the subject of a winding-up petition by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has left many hopeful investors in the dark about the future of their birds and their money.

The Official Receiver was appointed as provisional liquidator on Thursday and is now trying to track down and preserve the assets and financial records of the company until the winding-up petition is heard on May 8. The Receiver's appointment follows a DTI investigation under section 447 of the Companies Act.

Gary Hollaway, who invest-

ed with OFC a year ago and has been trying to get information from OFC since Monday, said: "They won't talk to me or release the records of what I actually own. At the moment I feel as if I've lost everything."

If earlier figures from the OFC are reliable, the company has taken in millions of pounds of investors' money. The money was used to buy ostriches. As a result, investors are not covered by the City regulators, since investments in animals and other objects are not considered financial investments. They do own the birds. But most ostrich owners will not be familiar with how to raise or sell an ostrich, and

it is possible that there will not be enough birds to go around.

Until the court decides whether to grant a full winding-up order, investors will remain in limbo. If the court decides to wind up the company, the Official Receiver will either call a meeting of creditors to give them the opportunity to vote on an outside liquidator, or he will apply to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to appoint a liquidator.

Investors should contact the Official Receiver at 21 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1 3SS. Tel: 0171-637 6605.

KAREN ZAGOR

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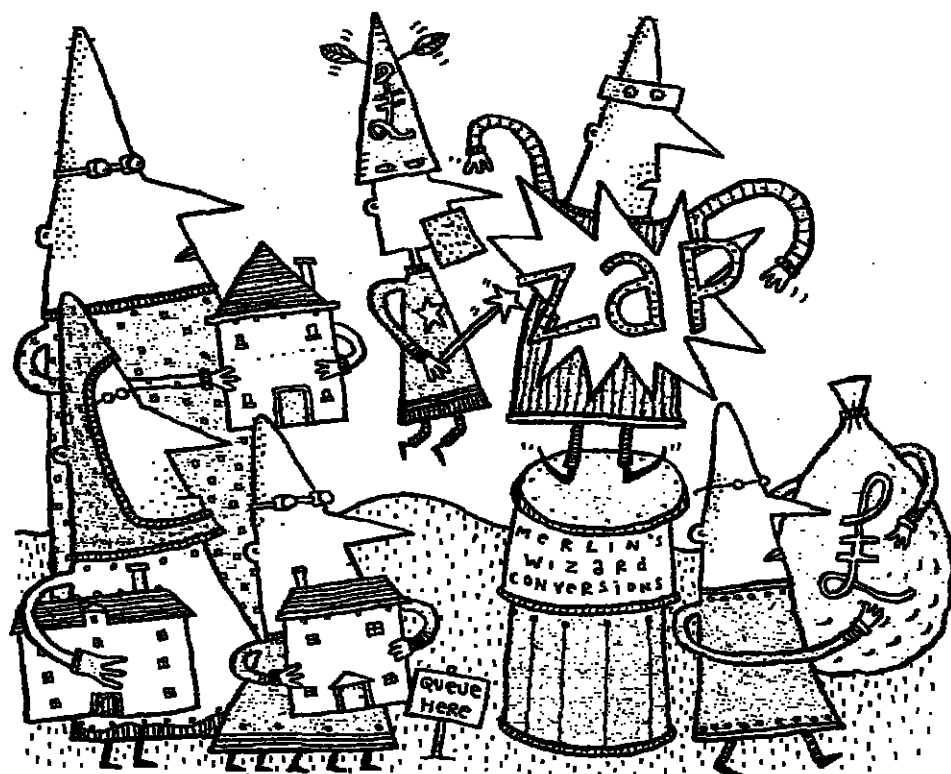
SPIKE GERRELL

Policies to release income in old age may be making a comeback, says Karen Zagor

A renaissance may be at hand for home income plans, as a growing number of older people look for ways to generate income in retirement.

The cost of old age is a problem for individuals and government alike. Later this month, a consultation paper on funding long-term care, drawn up by Oliver Heald, the Social Security Minister, is due to be published (see page 39). It is expected to focus on introducing an insurance arrangement, where people would take out policies to cover themselves for the cost of three years of care, after which the Government would step in to cover any extra years needed at a nursing home.

Cecil Hinton, managing director of Hinton & Wild, the independent financial advisers specialising in home income plans, says: "The paper is really tied into long-term care, but we are anticipating that there is going to be an



element of releasing equity through home income plans to fund the care."

Even if you never need to worry about care costs, ordinary living expenses can prove unwieldy after retirement. You

need a sizeable pension to provide even a modest standard of living in old age.

For most people, a home is their single biggest asset. Home income plans allow people to realise value from

their property before they die. The schemes fell into disrepute in the Eighties, when unscrupulous salesmen sold high-risk investment bonds linked to the plans.

Older people remortgaged all or part of their homes and used the proceeds to buy unit-linked investment bonds; the returns were supposed to cover interest repayment and generate income.

Instead, interest rates rose and investment returns fell. The Investors Compensation Scheme (ICS) was forced to mop up the mess. It has paid about £30 million compensation on some 2,000 claims, and there are many outstanding.

Despite this chequered past, there is reason to believe that home income plans, when properly structured, can be safe. Ship (Safe Home Income Plans) started in 1991 with the aim of winning back public confidence. Its members are the four main home income plan providers - Home & Capital Trust, Stalwart Assurance, Carlyle Life and Allchurches. They have established a series of self-imposed regulations to protect investors. These include guarantees that home income plan holders can remain in their homes for life, while also giving them the option of moving home. There are also schemes offered by reputable providers who are not Ship members.

There are two main types of home income plan - reversion plans and income (or

annuity) plans. With an income plan, you remortgage your property and use the proceeds to buy an annuity which gives income for life. You remain the legal owner of your home. With a reversion plan, you sell a portion or all of your property for an annuity or a lump sum. Mr Hinton normally advises selling no more than 75 per cent of a property, depending on the scheme and circumstances.

"Age is the important thing with these plans," he said. "These are really for people in their 70s and above."

In the US, similar schemes are becoming more popular. Fannie Mae (Federal National Mortgage Association), a private corporation federally chartered to provide financial products and services to increase the affordability of housing for low to middle-income Americans, last year introduced what it calls a "Homekeeper reverse mortgage". Homeowners can tap into the equity of their homes in various ways including arranging a stream of income, perhaps through an annuity, or setting up a line of credit which they can draw down.

Tom Mander, a spokesman for Fannie Mae, says: "It is guaranteed that no older person will be forced to leave their home because they have run out of equity. In addition, the borrower will never have to pay back more than the value of the home. Of course the loan has to be paid back eventually, perhaps by selling the home after death. But, if someone lives longer than expected, their estate will not owe more than the value of the house."

Mr Mander warns borrowers that there are costs involved. "There are also emotional considerations if parents want to leave property to their children."

The same is true of the UK. Home income plans will not generate a fortune. An income plan loan of £30,000, usually the upper limit, will provide an annuity of only £102 a month for a 75-year-old taxpaying woman and £156 for a man. Mark Bolland of Chamberlain De Broe, independent financial advisers, says: "I would advise investors considering these plans to do a lot of research first. It is important to make sure that you don't run up a bill that out-prices the house." For a copy of *Age Concern's* book "Using Your Home as Capital" send £4.95 to Age Concern, 1268 London Road, London SW16 4ER.

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KEY GUINNESS FLIGHT CORPORATE BOND TRUST INFORMATION AS AT 28.3.96

Investment Objective and Policy: to provide a high income and the opportunity for capital gains from a diversified portfolio of primarily Euro-Sterling, Bulldog, other corporate bonds and preference shares but Gilt and other government and public securities may also be included in the property of the Trust. Securities purchased will be of high quality and marketability. The Trust will be invested to ensure that units will, at all times, constitute qualifying investments in terms of the Personal Equity Plan Regulations 1989, as from time to time amended. Trust Size: £30.3m. Launch Date (and price): 7.10.91 (100p). Ex-dividend Dates: 31 December, 31 March, 30 June, 30 September. Distribution Dates: 10 January, 10 April, 10 July, 15 October. Reports Sent: Interim: 31 May, Annual: 30 November. Bid/offer Spread (maximum): 3.60% (3.08%). NB. This includes unit initial charge of 3.5%, which is waived for PEP purchases. Trustees: Royal Exchange Trust Company Limited, London EC2M 3TG. Regulated by IMRO. Auditor: KPMG, London EC4V 3PD. Trustee Charge: 0.06% maximum (plus VAT). Product and Scheme Particulars: available on request.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

*Estimated gross yields, as at 25.3.96 were redemption 7.7% and distribution 7.9% both of which are net of annual management charge and tax-free in a PEP (subject to a 40% tax payment). **BICA credit rating. An "AA" rating is defined as meaning "a bond which provides very strong protection against losses from credit default". Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. The value of this investment and the income from it may fall as well as rise and is not guaranteed. Also, deduction of charges and expenses means you may not get back the amount you invested. Tax benefits detailed are those currently applicable and will vary from one investor to another and may change in the future. Issued by Guinness Flight Fund Managers Limited, regulated by IMRO.

- Guinness Flight Fund Managers Limited (the "Plan Manager") is regulated by the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation (IMRO) in the conduct of its investment business and is approved by the Inland Revenue as a Plan Manager under the Personal Equity Plan Regulations 1989 (as from time to time amended) (the "Regulations"). To open a Plan you must complete and sign the application form, including the declarations, and meet with the conditions imposed by the Regulations and these Terms and Conditions. These Terms and Conditions form an agreement between you and the Plan Manager which will become effective on the date of acceptance by the Plan Manager of a completed application form signed by you.
- You may only subscribe to one General Personal Equity Plan in any Tax Year beginning 6 April (ending following 5 April). Subscriptions must be made by cheque payment to the Plan Manager. You can invest between £3,000 and £6,000. If £6,000 is not invested initially, additional monies may be invested during the course of a Tax Year. Application forms and cheques will be acknowledged.
- All uninvested money in the Guinness Flight Value Bond PEP (the "Plan") will be aggregated and held in a client money account with National Westminster Bank PLC (or another bank nominated by the Plan Manager, which may be an associate) in the name of the Plan Manager. Any interest earned will be credited to your Plan. The Plan will be invested in units in the Guinness Flight Corporate Bond Trust (the "Unit Trust"). Upon acceptance by the Plan Manager all subscriptions received by 12 noon on the business day preceding a dealing day (normally a Wednesday) will be aggregated and invested on the dealing day. Purchases of the Unit Trust will be not of its initial charge. Your Plan investments shall be beneficially owned by you and shall be registered in the name of the Plan Manager or its nominee, which may be an associate, as nominee of the Plan Manager. Documents of title to investments shall be held by the Plan Manager or as it may direct. The Unit Trust is managed by Guinness Flight Unit Trust Managers Limited (the "Unit Trust Managers") an associate of the Plan Manager. The Plan Manager or an associate or other person connected with it may, subject to the overriding principles of suitability and best execution, effect transactions in which the Plan Manager or associate has, directly or indirectly, an interest, relationship or arrangement that is material in relation to an investment or a transaction in an investment under the Plan. The Plan Manager may not commit you to supplement the money in the Plan by borrowing on your behalf. If requested, income will be distributed quarterly within 30 working days of the calculation dates being 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December. Partial withdrawals (subject to a minimum of £500 or terminations are normally aggregated and will be carried out on or before the first dealing day after a written request is received by the Plan Manager.
- You will receive copies of the Unit Trust Manager's Report and any other information issued to unitholders and be entitled to attend unitholders' meetings and vote. No money may be borrowed on your behalf against the security of the investments. You shall not dispose of or transfer any interest in investments or cash in the Plan through either a legal mortgage or equitable mortgage. You may seek to use the Plan as security for a loan through creating a mere equitable charge on the investments and cash in the Plan.
- You authorise the Plan Manager to organise all tax affairs in respect of the Plan. You will immediately inform the Plan Manager in writing if you cease to be a qualifying individual (see the declaration on the Application Form).
- You will be sent a deal advice once the Plan is invested and half-yearly statements not later than 20 working days after 30 June and 31 December showing: (i) the number of units in the Unit Trust held in the Plan, their cost, the bid price on the record date and any cash balance held; (ii) all transactions in the Plan during the statement periods; (iii) a statement that the Plan accounts are or have been audited by a qualified auditor; (iv) a statement of the basis on which the values of investments have been calculated. You may inspect the records relating to the Plan and receive copies, subject to a negotiable fee.
- The amount or rate of fees or the charging structure relating to the Plan may be changed on giving not less than 14 days' notice to you. Subject to 8. below, the following fees are payable to the Plan Manager: (i) an annual management fee of 0.65% p.a. (plus VAT if applicable), charged in two instalments of 0.325% (plus VAT if applicable) of the Plan value, as at 30 June and 31 December and pro rata for the initial and final periods of the Plan; (ii) a charge of £25 plus VAT for additional valuations. The Plan Manager may recover from the Plan all charges, duties and taxes incurred in transactions in the investments of the Plan. The Plan Manager may sell investments in the Plan and apply the proceeds in payment of fees and expenses due. The Unit Trust Manager receives fees as the manager of the Unit Trust which are reflected in the Unit Trust's unit price.
- The Plan Manager receives a rebate in respect of the full Unit Trust management fee charged within the Unit Trust and the Plan annual management fee will be reduced by at least that rebate value. The Unit Trust annual management fee is 0.65%. Therefore, currently no Unit annual management fee will be applied to the value of units held in the Plan (because an equivalent charge is already made within the Unit Trust).
- The Plan may be terminated by the Plan Manager on written notice to you. The Plan will terminate automatically with immediate effect if it becomes void under the Regulations. You may, by written notice, require the Plan Manager: (i) to terminate the Plan immediately and either to transfer to you the investments and cash comprised in the Plan and the income and rights attaching to them or to realise the investments and pay the proceeds to you; or (ii) to transfer, within such period as may be agreed between the Plan Manager and you, the Plan and the investments and cash within it to another Inland Revenue approved plan manager who agrees to accept the transfer. Three months' notice will be given if the Plan Manager intends to cease being the Plan Manager. On termination of the Plan, unless otherwise directed, the Plan Manager shall realise the investments in the Plan on or before the first dealing day following receipt of your instructions and shall pay to you the net proceeds of sale and any cash held in the Plan. Termination of the Plan will be subject to completion of outstanding transactions. These Terms and Conditions shall continue to apply as necessary notwithstanding termination of the Plan.
- Your Plan will cease to qualify for tax exemption under the Regulations from the date of your death. Upon receipt of formal notification and instructions from your legal personal representatives, the Plan will either be liquidated or the assets transferred to the persons as nominated by them.
- You confirm to the Plan Manager that during the continuance of the Plan you will remain the sole beneficial owner of the investments and cash, free from encumbrances. You will not have the right to cancel your Plan application under the Financial Services (Cancellation) Rules 1989 (as from time to time amended) if the application has been made on your own account, rather than through an independent financial adviser. Settlement of amounts due on termination or partial withdrawal will be made within 7 days of receipt of the proceeds by the Plan Manager. The Plan Manager may vary these Terms and Conditions from time to time by giving not less than 14 days' notice to the Plan Holder. The Plan is governed by English law.
- Complaints should be addressed to the Plan Manager's Compliance Officer. You also have the right to complain direct to the Investment Ombudsman and may be entitled to compensation under the Investor Compensation Scheme.
- The Plan Manager may pay commission of 0.5% p.a. (plus VAT if applicable), out of its Plan annual management fee, to introducing financial advisers.
- All notices and instructions to be given to the Plan Manager should be sent to 5 Gainsford Street, London SE1 2NE. Instructions shall be acknowledged by the Plan Manager. Notices and other documents to be given or sent to you shall be sent to your last notified address at your risk. April 1996

GUINNESS FLIGHT VALUE BOND PEP APPLICATION FORM FOR 1996/97

Please complete this Application Form in block capitals and return it, together with your cheque to Guinness Flight Fund Managers Limited, 5 Gainsford Street, London SE1 2NE. Tel: 0345 564 564.

1. NAME AND ADDRESS DETAILS

Title _____ First Names _____
Surname _____ Date of Birth _____
Permanent Residential Address _____
Postcode _____ Telephone (Daytime) _____

Please give your daytime telephone number in case of a query arising in relation to your application. This is solely for the purpose of processing your application, no salesman will call. If your application has been introduced via a financial adviser, Guinness Flight will contact the financial adviser.

Please enter your National Insurance Number _____

If you do not know your National Insurance Number see your form P60, notice of coding or tax return. Otherwise your employer or tax office may be able to help. If you have retired you can find the number on the front cover of your pension book.

2. INVESTMENT AMOUNT

Please note the minimum investment for each tax year is £3,000 and the maximum investment is £6,000.

I apply to subscribe £ _____ for the tax year 1996/97

I enclose my cheque for £ _____ made payable to "Guinness Flight Fund Managers Limited"

Before you invest you should have read the Terms and Conditions applicable to the Plan printed adjacent.

3. PROCEED

I would like my income to be reinvested ☐ distributed ☐ (please tick one box).

I would like my income paid into my bank ☐ (A bank mandate form will be sent to you for completion)

If none of the above boxes are ticked, income will be automatically reinvested.

4. AUTHORITY, NOTICES AND DECLARATIONS

I authorise the Plan Manager:

(a) to hold my cash subscription, Plan investments, interest, dividends and any other rights or proceeds in respect of those investments and any other cash in the Plan;

(b) to make on my behalf any claims to relief from tax in respect of Plan investments and to provide the Inland Revenue with information as to my Plan and Plan investments;

(c) on my written request to transfer or pay to me, as the case may be, Plan investments, interest, dividends, rights and other proceeds in respect of such investments or any cash.

I declare that:

(a) I am aged 18 years or over. I am resident and ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom for tax purposes or, though non-resident, perform duties which by virtue of Section 13(4)(a) of the Taxes Act are treated as being performed in the United Kingdom and will inform the Plan Manager if I cease to be so resident and ordinarily resident or to perform such duties;

(b) I have not subscribed and will not subscribe to any other General Plan for the same tax year(s) to which this application relates;

(c) this subscription is entirely from my own resources;

(d) the information given by me in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and I will notify the Plan Manager, without delay, of any changes in my circumstances affecting any of the information on this application.

Signature _____ Date _____

5. CANCELLATION RIGHTS

Cancellation rights as laid down in the Financial Services (Cancellation) Rules 1989 do not apply to an application made on your own account, rather than through an independent financial adviser.

For reference only: 3037/96

Agent's Stamp _____ 1996/97 Plan No: _____

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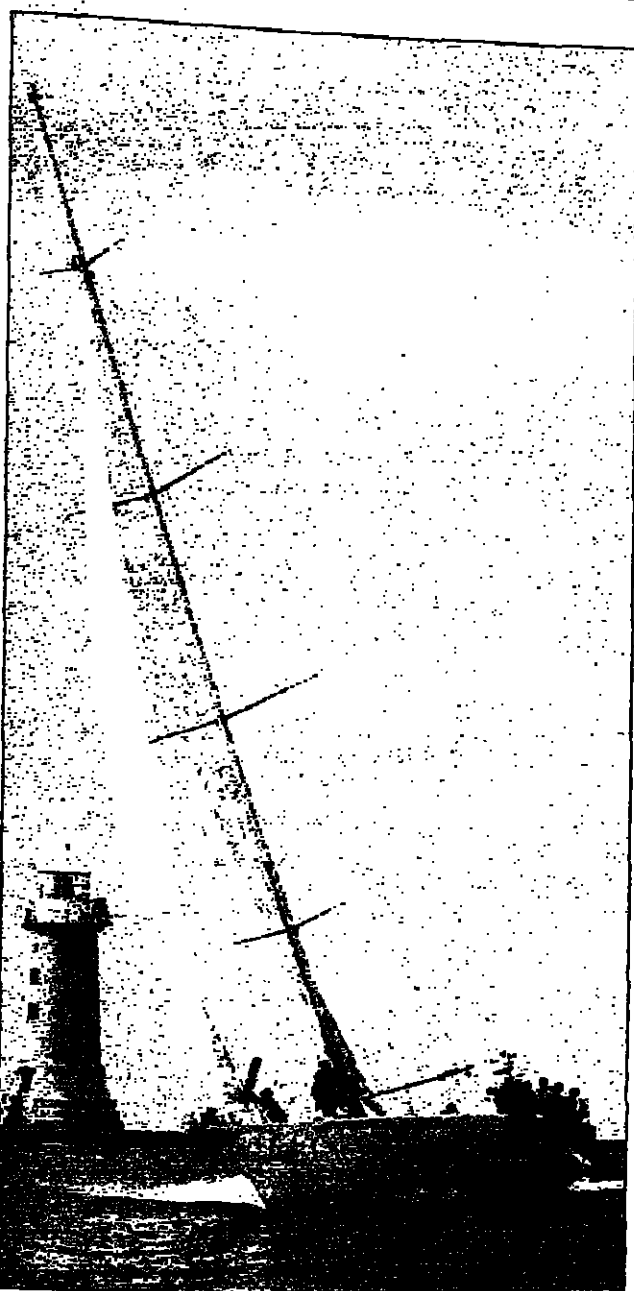
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HARGREAVES LANSDOWN



Plain sailing: brokers reckon on a premium of 1 per cent of value

Brokers braced for rush to the sea

Yacht owners visiting berths for the first time in months may get a shock, says Marianne Curphey

Insurance brokers have this week been inundated with calls from yacht owners keen to buy cover for their boats before they set out for Easter - the unofficial start of the sailing season.

"We've been flat out," said Bishop Skinner, the London-based broker. "Hundreds of calls have come through daily from people who want to fix up their insurance before they hit the water this weekend."

Insurance offices are also bracing themselves for a glut of claims. Many policyholders have left their craft unattended over the winter and will discover they have been victims of a break-in.

Britain's marinas are being targeted by increasingly sophisticated gangs of thieves who raid private yachts and carry off thousands of pounds worth of navigation equipment.

Police believe the stolen goods are then sold as second-hand items hundreds of miles away in the boat world's equivalent of car boot sales.

"It is a real problem," said Stephen Whiteman of Marine Underwriting Agencies in Lyndhurst, Hampshire. "Owners of boats accumulate lots of spare equipment which they want to sell on quite legitimately. We are concerned, however, that some sales might also be used to dispose of stolen goods."

A third of all claims are for theft and the most commonly-stolen items are outboard motors and navigation equipment which can cost from between £200 and £3,000 to replace. Insurers ask policyholders to keep records of all serial numbers.

In addition, some insurers specify that small boats should be kept in a locked building while trailers attached to large vessels should be fitted with wheel clamps.

The cost of insurance depends on the type of craft and

its value, but a rough estimate is that the annual premium will be about 1 per cent of the value. Cover for a £75,000 cruiser would be roughly between £700 and £800. A powerful speedboat worth £12,000 would cost about £500 to insure because of the higher risks.

Unlike private motor insurance, all boat insurance policies are tailor-made, depending on the experience of the yacht owner, the age of the boat, the location of its mooring and the range within which it will be used.

Mr Whiteman said older boats attract higher premiums because their maintenance costs are higher. "The sea is a harsh environment in which to keep anything and older boats need a lot of attention. Premiums for new boats are much lower. A £100,000 yacht based at a secure marina on the south coast might cost only £600 to insure."

Like careful drivers, careful sailors can build up a no-claims bonus of 20 per cent over five years which can be used to reduce the cost of insurance. Even without this, premiums have been falling for the past few years, as competition in the market drove prices down. "We are on a downward cycle for rates at present," Mr Whitehead said.

There is no way of telling whether this will continue. If one big player decides rates must go up, the rest of the industry is likely to follow.

Ian Burns, director of Bachmann Insurance Brokers in Guernsey, agreed. "Rates in general have been falling slightly this year but our clients spend much of the year in the US and the Caribbean, where liability costs, and therefore rates, are higher."

Bishop Skinner 0171 253 6572. Marine Underwriting Agencies 01703 283361

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*Sources: Micropal, buying price to selling price, gross income reinvested from launch (or closest available date on Micropal) to 1.4.96. Schroder UK Growth Fund 1st out of 9 since 2.5.94. Schroder UK Enterprise Fund 1st out of 105 since 1.8.88 (over five years, 3rd out of 124). Schroder Income Fund 1st out of 6 since 3.1.72 (over five years 5th out of 73). Schroder Smaller Companies Fund 1st out of 13 since 1.6.79 (over five years 2.5th out of 56).

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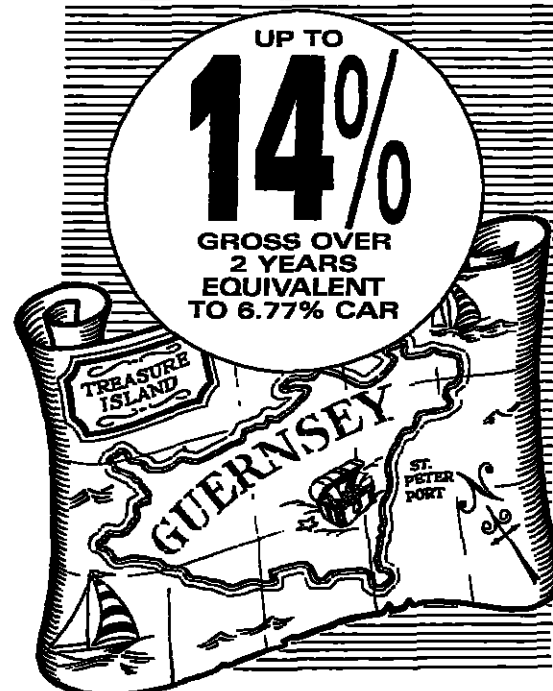
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Taking an early plunge most people have to wait until they are 50 before they can retire on a personal pension scheme. But there are a number of exceptions, including those who work as deep-sea divers, fashion models, skiers, footballers, and trapeze artists. The nature of their jobs means they may not be able to continue after a certain age, and that they must make special provision so that they can "retire" when still only 30 years of age.

Simple rules for choosing the best paying pension

Helen Pridham
on four main
personal plans
offering various
ways of investing
contributions



PENSIONS GUIDE
PART
6

For most people nowadays their biggest investment is their pension. But with more than 80 different companies offering a myriad of plans, the choice is bewildering.

Even more companies are to move into the market later this year. Virgin Direct is about to launch its own personal pension plan, which Tony Wood, its marketing director, claims will be different from those currently on offer. He says: "It will be consumer friendly, it will be easy to understand and great value for money."

However, many doubt that choosing the right pension plan can ever be that simple. Financial advisers point out that a variety of factors must be taken into account when deciding on a suitable personal pension. Most people have to wait until they are 50 before they can retire on a personal pension scheme, with the exception of fashion models, skiers, footballers, deep-sea divers and trapeze artists, who because of the nature of their profession can retire as early as 30.

Levet-Scriver, a financial adviser, says: "A person's attitude to risk and the number of years until expected retirement are important factors. Then there are charges, flexibility and past performance to consider when selecting the right product."

There are four main types of personal pension plans currently available offering different ways of investing your pension contributions:

With-profits. Investment is in a fund which holds a mixture of shares, property and fixed-interest securities. The profits from this fund are paid out in bonuses decided by the insurance company's actuaries. These plans are usually regarded as a low risk option because they provide a guaranteed element, and the annual bonuses that once added to your policy are also guaranteed. But a large part of the final fund value is paid as a terminal bonus that varies according to investment results. Bonuses have been reducing for the past six years.

Unit linked. Investors usually have a choice of insurance funds which specialise in UK shares, overseas shares, fixed interest securities, property investment and cash deposits. But most investors opt for managed funds which hold a spread of these investments. The value of the unit linked funds will fluctuate in line with the value of their underlying investments which can go down as well as up depending on investment conditions.

Unit and investment trusts. Several unit and investment trust companies, such as Fleming and Foreign & Colonial, now offer personal pension

plans linked to their own trusts. These funds are mainly invested in shares. They include many specialist trusts investing in both the UK and overseas markets, such as the US, Europe, Japan and the Far East. Garthure, the unit trust company, has recently added its UK Index Tracker trust to the options available to pension plan investors.

Self-invested. Some providers, notably Winterthur Life, have recently introduced these schemes whereby they set up and administer a personal pension plan but leave investors, or their advisers, free to choose the investments. These can include shares, bonds, unit and investment trusts, insurance company funds, deposit accounts and commercial property. But these schemes are usually only cost effective for investors who have already built up a fund of

investors should use them with caution. Charges and past performance are important considerations in choosing a pension provider. Now providers must give prospective policyholders details of charges in the "Key Features" document they provide when a policy is purchased. The differences in charges are significant. A recent survey by *Money Management* magazine found that on a 25-year monthly premium plan, charges levied by the most expensive insurance company would reduce the projected pension fund by more than 34 per cent compared with a 12.6 per cent reduction in the case of the least expensive provider.

One way of keeping charges down is to build up your pension by means of one-off single premiums rather than taking out a regular premium contract. This approach also gives you greater flexibility.

With most regular premium contracts the commission paid to the salesman takes a major chunk out of the first two years' premiums. If you have to stop paying contributions before your expected retirement date, you are penalised. Lower commission on single premiums lessens this problem. But Moira Elms of accountants Coopers & Lybrand warns: "If you are going to pay by single premiums, you have to be disciplined. Many people prefer making regular contributions because they know that otherwise they will end up spending the money on something else."

A compromise solution is to pay an affordable level of regular premiums to a company that will not penalise you too heavily if you have to stop your contributions and top up with single premiums. This also enables you to invest with more than one provider to spread your investment risk.

Many advisers believe that self-invested personal pensions (SIPPs) will become increasingly popular in the future as investors' pension funds build up and they wish to access different investment managers. This can be done in a relatively cost efficient way since SIPPs usually have fixed monetary fees for administration.

Contributors of single premiums have to be disciplined payers

around £30,000 in a conventional personal pension plan which can be transferred into the SIPP.

So which type of pension plan is best? Although with-profits policies are still paying out some of the best results thanks to high terminal bonuses based on past profits, many financial advisers favour the unit-linked approach. Anthony Warwick-Thompson, personal pension specialist at actuaries Bacon & Woodrow, says: "For long term pension investors, unit linked managed funds are likely to produce better results in future than with-profits policies."

However, if you are within five to ten years of retirement and/or you are a particularly cautious investor, with-profits plans still have a role to play, according to Mr Levet-Scriver. He says: "The problem is that many people say they do not want to take any risks with their pension but they could be taking a greater risk if they do not ensure that their money is invested where it will grow and outpace inflation."

Unit and investment trust pensions are regarded as efficient on charges but of higher risk. Advisers argue that in-

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Scottish Friendly	15,282
Co-operative	15,223
Equitable Life	15,068
NFU Mutual	14,713
Axa Equity & Law	14,414

Term: 10 Years	
Co-operative	52,266
Scottish Amicable	50,276
Friends Provident	49,250
Scottish Friendly	48,798
Axa Equity & Law	48,483

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Term: 5 years	
Mercury Life	20,450
Professional (M.Gren)	18,211
Professional (Fidelity)	17,555
Skandia (Perpetual)	16,942
Lon & Man (Perf)	16,941

Term: 10 Years	
Colonial Mutual	43,290
TSB	41,047
Abbey Life	40,226
Old Mutual Spec Mkt	40,110
Axa Equity & Law	39,540

Source: Money Management

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Book helps make work child's play

The 1996 edition of *The Working Parents Handbook* is now available, offering a practical guide to childcare. The handbook, published by Parents at Work, a national charity committed to the welfare of children of working parents, explains how the Children Act 1989 applies to parents and carers and includes advice on finding a carer and employing a nanny. Send a cheque for £5.50 made payable to Parents at Work, 45 Beech Street, London EC2Y 8AD.

A credit card for the over-50s has been launched by Saga Services. Key benefits of the card include no annual fee, up to eight weeks' interest-free credit, 13.5 per cent APR for the first six months, free travel accident insurance of up to £150,000, security of a photocard and cheque book facility. Saga's Visa card is widely accepted in the UK. For further details, call 0800 300 225, ext 2345.

Ernst & Young, the tax adviser, has developed a software package designed to help employers to meet their self-assessment obligations. *EY/PA plus* will enable businesses to calculate tax values on screen, produce copies of

PID forms for employees and management reports such as stock options and personal tax returns. The system can be customised for an individual company. Tel: 0171 928 2000.

Help the Aged has produced a new edition of its leaflet *Check Your Tax*, which aims to ensure older people understand the tax system and take advantage of all the tax breaks available. Several million people, many of them pensioners, are needlessly paying tax and losing a fifth of their savings income to the Inland Revenue, according to the charity. The leaflet explains what income is taxable and what is tax-free, what tax allowances are and how they work. For a free copy, send a SAE to The Information Department (TAX), Help the Aged, St James's Walk, London EC1R 0BE.

Green Flag National Breakdown, the rescue organisation, is offering a seasonal reduction for motorists who take out membership before 7pm on April 8. Four levels of cover are available, costing between £26.50 and £82.50. To qualify, call 0800 000111.

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Robert Fleming/S&P 08

Football narrows great North and South divide

We often over-romanticise the values of sport, but yesterday, in Seoul, I shared for a morning the physical and emotional bonding that has sustained men who have been exiled from their country for 50 years and who believe to the soles of their boots that playing football can give them some sense of lost belonging.

Let me introduce you to a winger they call the Stanley Mathews of Korea — Park Hyung-kun. He is leaner than Sir Stan ever was; at 76, he still plays for an hour every day, a man of even greater longevity. Park intends to keep on playing until they open the border across the military demarcation line that separates the South from North Korea, where he, and all the members of his remarkable football club, were born. They fled south when the Communist police issued warrants on

them, and, for the half a century that they have been cut off even from an exchange of letters with their families, they have ritually lined up on a gravel pitch near I'Acouwan.

At 7am yesterday, these men played a full game. At 9.30, at my request, they indulged in an impromptu 20-minute game, against a side of schoolboys, wearing full German national team replica kit.

The old men beat the boys 3-0. In Park Hyung-kun, you could see the alert eyes, the hunger for the ball, the ability to deliver crosses with either foot to colleagues who deftly scored. Perhaps it was the technique of the old boys, perhaps it was the deference shown by the youngsters, and perhaps it was simply that the expatriates had the unity, the knowledge where each man stood and would move, bred before the fathers of their opponents were born.

On June 1, the expatriate

players from the North hope for a dream. They want South Korea to be granted the right to host the 2002 World Cup, in preference to Japan. If that happens, they believe that it could act as a catalyst to opening up the border, based on outmoded ideological differences, and to allow not only the symbolic game that they plan in Pyongyang, but also the removal of the wall that divides them from their people.

You can sense the hope, the desperation, in these players. "I want to play back home, just once. If necessary, but if not, then at least I hope the World Cup would start a dialogue and I would be able to be buried beneath the goalposts in the town where I came from," Park said, articulating the feeling of losing his job (he was a laboratory technician and never regained such status in exile) and the hope of sharing, through sport, with



ROB HUGHES
Weekend View

any relatives who might be alive, an end to a bitter separation. His face is parched, his eyes opaque, but, on the field, he comes alive, a schoolboy within a man, darting here and there, trying to beat an opponent who could be a grandchild.

I was able to take to these men a message of hope from three VIPs. Kim Young-sam, the head of state, had said the previous day: "There is no reason to exclude our neighbour. I will not be president in 2002, but I would attend any game in Pyongyang. It would be my pleasure and I and my Government would start to work on such a hope the

moment the World Cup was granted to South Korea."

His determination was reiterated by Dr Mong-joon Chung, the son of the founder of Hyundai, the mammoth firm which has helped to establish South Korea as one of the most aggressive economies in the world; and Mong-joon's own father is an exile, like the players, from the Communist incursion north of the border. Third, Dr Lee Hong-koo, until recently the prime minister of the southern republic, reiterates that unification will be his life's dream, and he is the man who has, so far, come closest to persuading those in the North to play ball.

With this political unity, with the appreciation in the South that participation in four World Cups has owed so much to the North Korean obsession with the game, football does indeed play an important role in people's aspirations. Five years ago, players from North and South were united in a Korea team that played in the Fifa world youth championship in Portugal. Exchanges were denied once that uplifting tournament was finished, hence the North, despite its recent application to Fifa, the sports world governing body, could not be included in the official bid to stage the World Cup of 2002.

However, if it was Good Friday in Great Britain, it was good and bad in Korea. For even as the men played, one heard that Joao Havelange, the president of Fifa, had succeeded once again with his hostility towards the Korean bid. He has championed Ja-

pan from the beginning, and now appears to have destroyed attempts from Europe, Africa and Asia to allow Korea and Japan to co-host the World Cup rather than to continue the struggle to beat one another, and to spend millions seeking the nomination.

Havelange is an old man who has lost any sense of sporting value. In Seoul, men of his own vintage gave their reason for playing until death. "Our families — five million of us who came south — can't have forgotten them," they said. "We have no other way of helping them, other than hoping that they will be playing football in the North thinking just the same as we when we play in Seoul."

However, I came across an exception, Hong Duk-young, the goalkeeper of the 1954 Korea World Cup team. Hong

says that he did not feel humiliation when he let in nine goals against Hungary, masterminded by Puskas. "Embarrassed? Only because our forwards did not cross the halfway line to score one goal," he said wryly.

Hong, who later became an international referee, expects to finish his days living on the memories and the photographs. He does not play with the ex-pats, he does not attempt to keep the past alive, and he does not believe, after so long, that any relatives still exist, or that there is hope of a unified North and South Korean World Cup. "It should be football, only football, no politics," he sighed. "I don't think there is a single possibility that we could host 2002 together, the two Koreas have not reached the stage where they could co-operate as hosts."

One forlorn retired sportsman, against 11 who still cling to the dream.

ALAN WELLS

England international tires of extended stay in the comfort zone

Reality beckons Anderton

At 24, Darren Anderton leads a cosy life. He lives in five-bedroomed, mock-Tudor comfort in a smart part of Hemel Hempstead, in Hertfordshire. He drives a Mercedes 500 SL, when the sun shines, or a sponsored Honda Prelude. He still earns a substantial salary, even though, technically, he has not worked for six months.

He wants for little, in a tough world, yet would sacrifice much of what he has for a game of football. Not 15 minutes against Arsenal reserves, half-an-hour against a Korean touring side, or 45 minutes against Brighton reserves — all that he has managed since September. What he needs is a full 90 minutes against anybody, no adverse reaction and a clean bill of health.

Anderton, the free-flowing Tottenham Hotspur midfielder player, has made only five first-team appearances this season: Anderton, the rangy England winger, has not made an international appearance since June last year. A grave loss of pace and precision, to club and country. He will not play over Easter and will then have a maximum of four matches in which to prove his fitness and add to his tally of nine caps, and three goals, during the European championship finals this summer.

Though Terry Venables, the Eng-

Russell Kempson on the trials and tribulations of one of Terry Venables's brightest hopes

land coach, is a loyal admirer, he will insist on conclusive proof that the groin muscle, badly torn during a game against Queens Park Rangers and subsequently requiring surgery, has finally mended. Friendship, forged from the day when the former Tottenham manager signed the raw, gangly youngster from Portsmouth in 1992, will count for nothing in the heat of Euro '96.

"Terry has been very encouraging," Anderton said. "We've spoken a few times and he says that, if I'm not fit for this summer, I should make sure I'm OK for next season. He's told me to be sensible. Take my time, make sure it's right."

Gerry Francis, the Tottenham manager, has adopted a similarly sympathetic approach. "I'm not the best at coming back from injuries. I always want to return too quickly," Anderton said. "No one wants me back more than Gerry, but he said: 'Use your brain. If it's not right, it's not right. Don't do anything silly.'"

Anderton is bearing up well. He is still, essentially, the same fresh-faced, square-jawed lad who left home for the first time when Venables offered Portsmouth £2

million four years ago. More confident, less self-conscious, and he laughs a lot, concluding many sentences with a chuckle.

If he feels frustrated, when the awful realisation of a lost season grips him, he retreats to his family in Southampton, where he was born, seeking support and solace from his father, Norman, a taxi driver, his mother, Jane, his brother, Scott, 22, and his twin brother and sister, Ben and Kelly, 20.

He tries to make the trip once or twice a week. "If I'm up here, and go out, people are always asking me when I'm going to be back [playing]," he said. "It's a bit tiresome: it's nice to get away. I never thought it would take this long. Every time I think I'm getting there, I get another little strain. It does get to me, maybe a bit more than I show, but I keep most of my feelings inside."

Anderton dismisses the inevitable speculation: that his career is over, that he has a crumbling hip condition — "that was quite funny, that one" — and that he is unhappy with his medical treatment from the club. "As long as myself and

Tottenham know what's really going on, that's all that matters," he said.

The days are long. Weights, swimming, running, physiotherapy, kicking a ball against a wall, playing snooker, table tennis, watching the television, another trip to the South Coast. Match days, though, are the worst.

"I go to all the games at White Hart Lane, and go in the dressing-room, to see the guys up, but I end up hating it," he said. "I'm obviously pleased if we win, and it would be great if we could qualify for Europe next season, but I just get this empty feeling. Afterwards, I often wish I'd stayed at home."

Anderton knows that, lurking ever-nearer the surface, is make-your-mind-up time. "I haven't given up on the European finals: all I need is a full 90 minutes to see what happens," he said. "Even after the QPR game, I thought I'd be playing again in three weeks. Then it was three more weeks, then three more... and here I am, six months later, and I still don't really know."

On Wednesday, he tries again: for Tottenham reserves against Bristol City at the Hand Stadium, home of Clevedon Town, of the Beazer Homes League. A venue for Euro '96 it is not, but it could yet hold the key to Anderton's and England's immediate prospects.



Anderton has been left to ponder his future while struggling to overcome a long-term injury

'Stick Man' weighs in to lift Reid

By Louise Taylor

A TELEPHONE call from Lancashire to Whitley Bay dictated that FA Cup semi-final Sunday this season will remain a landmark for Michael Bridges. Bridges, 17, the Sunderland striker, picked up the receiver at his home to be greeted by Alan Shearer, the Blackburn Rovers and England centre forward, congratulating him on scoring twice in the 3-2 home win over Huddersfield Town last Saturday after going on as a substitute after 75 minutes.

Like Shearer, Bridges is a product of Wallasey Boys Club and was spotted initially by Jack Hixon, a veteran scout based in the North East. Shearer and Hixon remain in regular telephone contact, the latter frequently enquiring about Bridges. Such judgment has been endorsed by the protégé's record of four goals in nine substitute appearances — or 161 minutes — for the leaders of the Endcliffe Insurance League first division.

Bridges has yet to begin a game (he is likely to be a substitute at Barnsley today), but he invariably serves as a match-winning catalyst. It is the same in his 19 youth and reserve team starts, which have yielded 21 goals this season. Small wonder that, with Blackburn, Everton, and Liverpool eager to sign him, Bridges was hastily handed a 2½-year contract at the turn of the year.

"It would be tremendous if I could achieve anything like Alan Shearer has done," Bridges said. "That's what I hope to achieve — he is the best." Shearer's call to the

home that Bridges shares with his parents — a retired policeman and a nurse — was his second, the first coming after Bridges's debut goal in a 2-0 win away to Southend United.

A wiry 6ft 1in and 10st 11lb, Bridges has been dubbed "The Stick Man" by colleagues. Still growing, and most definitely at the lean and lanky stage, he has already been likened to the youthful Trevor Francis. Understandably, Peter Reid, the Sunderland manager, has been reluctant to ask too much too soon. "Considering Michael's current state of physical development, I prefer to put him on for short bursts, but he's close to his first start," Reid said.

Yet, this apparent frailty deceives — both goals against Huddersfield being headers,

to complement those scored at Southend and Grimsby with his boot. "I told Michael to go on and get me a goal last week," Reid said with a smile. "but he didn't do what he was told — he got two."

He also earned the sponsor's man-of-the-match award, bottles of whisky and brandy passed on to Paul Stewart and Kevin Ball, his team-mates. Forced to drink orange juice when Reid convened his squad for a few morale-boosting glasses of wine, Bridges is always willing to offer players a lift home in his newly-acquired pride and joy — a second-hand Vauxhall Nova.

An instinctive positional sense combined with that unerring finisher's knack should furnish him with a life rich in

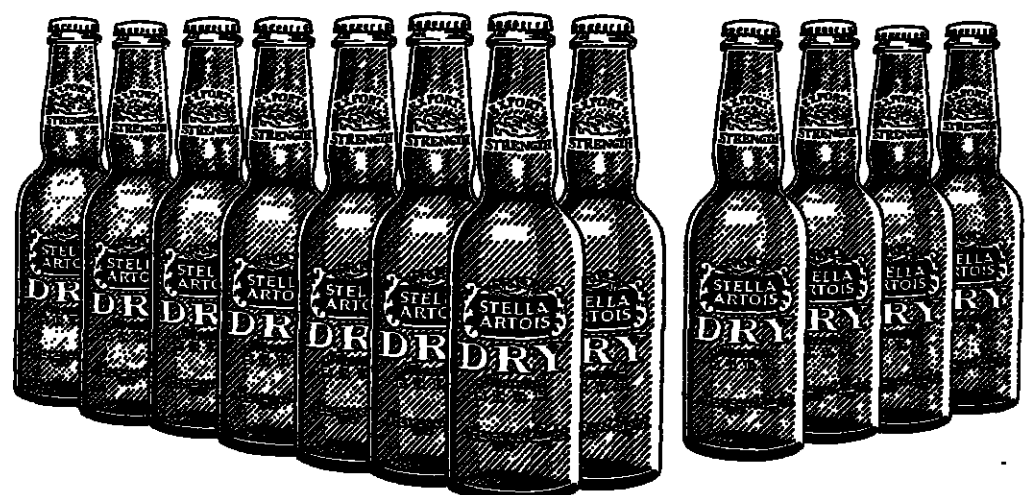
material comforts and personal fulfilment. "He's got something special," Reid said. "Michael has an unusual high-stepping style, and the asset of being able to pull the trigger with both feet — although he is more comfortable shooting with the right. Happily, he's a level-headed lad with sensible parents who are very proud of him, and the only thing holding him back is his lack of strength."

"I'm not a great fan of players working out with weights, but he's doing light circuits, and we've taken advice from dieticians to try to build him up. Now, it's a question of how quickly he develops. When he does, I definitely believe Michael could become one of the really special players."

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Bridges: likely to be on the bench against Barnsley



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BODDINGTONS. THE CREAM OF MANCHESTER.

BY PETER BALL

With Juninho playing in only his second home match in nearly two months, Middlesbrough looked the more purposeful side at the start. The Brazilian might have marked his return with a goal, but after Mustoe had released him, Atherton got back in time

HEATHFIELD - WEDNESDAY (4-5-1): K
Parnham, P. Alderton, J. Newsome, C.
Walker, S. Nicol (sub: L. Briscoe, 84) — G
M. Thompson, M. Dwyer, J. Sheridan (sub:
H. Hyde, 75), M. Pemberton, R. Binkley — D
Kest (sub: D. Kovacic, 75).
Referee: K. Cooper (Pontypool).



BY ALYSON RUDD

Charlton seemed to forget the laws of physics. let alone the laws governing a promotion challenge. Much of their passing was pointless and panic seemed to govern most defensive decisions. Still, Charlton did create sufficient chances to give Feuer, Luton's American goalkeeper, the opportunity to shine. He saved bravely from Leaburn in the

"I think the whole place is getting anxious," Alan Curbishley, the Charlton manager, said. "Perhaps we're running before we can walk."

For Lenny Lawrence, the Luton manager, the result represented a precious point

almost embarrassed Liverpool in the FA Cup.

CHARLTON ATHLETIC (4-4-2): A Petterson — S Brown, C Whyte, R Fulus, J Stuart (sub P Linger, 52min) — M Robson, K Jones, L Bowyer (sub D Whyte, 74), J Robinson — B Allen, C Leaburn.

LUTON TOWN (4-4-2): I Feuer — G Alexander, S Davis, D Petterson, M Thomas — A Thorpe (sub G Tomlinson, 81), F Harvey (sub M Johnson, 74), G Waddock, B Guernichev — K Grant (sub S Oakes 76), P Wilkinson.

Referee: W Burns

By DAVID MADDOCK

England have three fixtures, before the championship gets under way, in which to coax casualties back to fitness. They entertain Hungary, before travelling to play against China and Hong Kong.

BY PETER BALL
AND DAVID MADDOCK

"I do not want to be playing for Manchester United if I am not at the very top," he said. "I would prefer to move away, and perhaps play a couple of years in Japan. That may come at the end of my current contract, or maybe a year afterwards."

[illegible]

European golfers among also rans in last tournament before Masters

Ballesteros and Cejka free to leave for Augusta

FROM JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT
IN MARIETTA, GEORGIA

IT IS all an odyssey for Alexander Cejka. The first competitive visit to the United States by Europe's newest golfing discovery ended after two rounds of the BellSouth Classic here yesterday. Cejka was in bad humour after his second successive 77, which left him ten over par and 18 strokes behind Gene Sauers, the early second-round leader, at the Atlanta Country Club.

The German's second round was dotted with bogeys and double bogeys — six in all. His face and his demeanour at the end of a round, played in a biting wind beneath a bright

of his magnificent short game. Not until the 18th did we see a glimpse of the old Ballesteros. To one accustomed to seeing him in the trees, in the rough, off the fairway, anywhere other than where he should have been, it was as unexpected as catching a glimpse of a speck of blue sky on a wet day.

Ballesteros's drive found the middle of the fairway, a rare occurrence these days. He swung as smoothly and languidly as he used to for his second shot, sending his ball 150 yards up the right side of the fairway, setting himself up to attack the flag, which was high on the left side of the green.

From there, it was pure Ballesteros. His ball flew at the flag as if guided by radar, pitched six feet short, hopped on and settled 18 inches from the hole. The crowd managed to extract their frozen hands from their gloves long enough to clap and whistle. The Spaniard looked impassive. It was his third birdie in 27 holes.

It was more of the same on his homeward half. Dropped shots on the 1st, 3rd, 7th and 9th and one gleaming birdie, at the short 6th. He totalled 78 for the second day in a row and again Ballesteros will miss the cut, as he has in three of his four tournaments so far this year.

"I have no confidence," Ballesteros said. "My new clubs are fine. My game is fine. My back is fine. I just have no confidence."

Sam Torrance, on the other hand, nearly played really well and is full of confidence. He played ten holes in three under par, wrapped up well against the cold wind. He birdied the 18th, rapping in a 25-footer up and across the slope of the final green. And he wore a smile on his face at the end.

The trouble was that he had

a horrid run of three holes in the middle of his round. Having fought back from three over par after two holes to level par after seven, Torrance then made two simple mistakes that cost him dearly.

On the 13th, a short hole of 156 yards playing downwind, he hit a wedge into the water and though he saved himself slightly by birdieing the hole

with his second ball so only one stroke was wasted, it was a careless way to drop a stroke. Then, on the 14th, he hit his ball from a bunker over the green and into more water to waste another stroke. His third successive bogey contained a measure of bad luck in that when he got to his drive he discovered his ball had a patch of mud on it that

affected its flight on his second shot. The ball wobbled in the air and missed the green. He took three to get even.

It was not even midday when Torrance finished with a 72 for a total of 146, and he faced a long wait to see whether or not he had made the cut. "It's a big difference to get two more days' competitive practice," Torrance said. "It's



Ballesteros, whose poor form has left him short of confidence, missed the halfway cut after a plethora of errors

DETAILS

EARLY SECOND-ROUND SCORES (US unless stated): 137: G. Sauers 69, 68; N. Larson 68, 69; D. Breda 71, 62; 138: T. Torrance 68, 70; 139: D. Breda 71, 62; 140: L. Cejka 77, 69; 141: J. Breda 71, 69; 142: C. Cejka 77, 69; 143: M. Cejka 77, 69; 144: B. Cejka 77, 69; 145: B. Cejka 77, 69; 146: B. Cejka 77, 69; 147: B. Cejka 77, 69; 148: B. Cejka 77, 69; 149: B. Cejka 77, 69; 150: B. Cejka 77, 69.

LEADING FIRST-ROUND SCORES: 68: J. Wilson, C. Pavin, J. Gallagher; 69: R. Cochran, N. Larson; 70: M. Breda, D. Breda; 71: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 72: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 73: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 74: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 75: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 76: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 77: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 78: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 79: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 80: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 81: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 82: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 83: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 84: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 85: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 86: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 87: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 88: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 89: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 90: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 91: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 92: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 93: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 94: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 95: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 96: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 97: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 98: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 99: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 100: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 101: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 102: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 103: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 104: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 105: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 106: J. Breda, C. Cejka; 107: J. 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SATURDAY APRIL 6 1996

FOOTBALL 38
ANDERTON EAGER
TO BREAK AWAY
FROM COMFORT ZONE

Hill steers straight through all the distractions



Hill: impressive

FROM OLIVER HOLT
IN BUENOS AIRES

THERE is a host of sub-texts floating around in the humid Argentine air this weekend. The selling of Jacques Villeneuve has been put on hold while his manager tries to evaluate just how much damage the obsessive attention lavished on him is wreaking and Jean Alesi is busy saying he is a changed man, a gentler, kinder driver now that Benetton have told him to cut out the wild stuff.

There is the drivers' testy spat with the International Motor Racing Federation (FIA) over the gov-

erning body's ill-disguised contempt for the Grand Prix Drivers' Association, a quarrel that will run and run until the start of next season, bursting occasionally into flames.

And there are the guessing games surrounding yesterday's practice sessions, the attempt to divest them of the mysteries of which teams are concentrating on setting fast times and which are merely playing around with their set-ups in readiness for tomorrow's Argentine Grand Prix, saving themselves for this afternoon's sole qualifying session.

All these are cameo parts, playing the straight men to Damon Hill's

leading role. Hill finished top in practice yesterday, 0.1sec ahead of the Ferrari of Michael Schumacher, 0.3sec ahead of the Benetton-Renault of Alesi. All the drivers, particularly Alesi and his team-

Practice times 37

mate, Gerhard Berger, complained a bump at the end of the straight had made sending a competitive lap time difficult and dangerous.

Hill is the strong favourite to win his third successive race of the season here and extend his already

commanding lead in the championship. If that happens, Nigel Mansell's record of five straight wins at the start of the 1992 season will be within his sights.

"Nigel's record had not really occurred to me," Hill said, "although for some reason I did think about Alberto Ascari being the last person to win six in a row in the early 1950s. But I have just got to isolate each event completely. I am treating this race as if it was the first race or the last race. Nothing that has happened before or after is going to affect the result of this one."

Hill, who impressed everyone at his regular Thursday press confer-

ence here by admitting that the Williams-Renault was a "far superior car" to the rest of the field, and Villeneuve, who could only manage 11th in practice, ate together in a harbourside Italian restaurant here on Thursday night, speaking perhaps about the pressures of Formula One that the young French-Canadian is struggling to come to terms with and which Hill seems to have mastered at last.

The weeks since his bravura debut performance in Australia last month have been spiced with talk about how Villeneuve is poised to become the richest driver ever but in Brazil last week he was angry about

the hounding he had from the local media in particular, the photographers and film crews who pounced on him as he tried to enjoy a few days' break before the race at the beach house of the late Ayrton Senna.

"Jacques has been receiving a lot of attention and it was beginning to get out of hand," his assiduous manager, Craig Pollock, said yesterday. "There were too many distractions in Brazil. The situation became unbearable and while I am not making excuses for him, I feel he wasn't able to focus fully on the job in hand. It is all very different from what we were used to in IndyCars."

Dark Blue underdogs seek to turn Boat Race tide that runs in Cambridge's favour

Oxford dream needs Topolski for inspiration

BY DAVID MILLER

THE BOAT Race, Jonathan Searle says, is weird. And brilliant. As someone who can compare it, first-hand, with winning an Olympic rowing gold medal, Searle should know. It is, he asserts, the ultimate in mental pressure.

The public also seems to understand instinctively, without knowing a feather from a crab. This afternoon, the race will again capture one of the year's largest television sporting audiences.

Last year, when the talismanic influence of Dan Topolski enabled a no-hope Oxford crew to make a race of it up to Hammersmith Bridge, the seven million viewing figure was exceeded only by that for the Grand National, the FA and League Cup finals and the Wimbledon men's singles final. The event, sponsored by Beefeater Gin, surpassed the audience for the Wimbledon women's final and the Derby, and had twice that of the London Marathon.

Topolski, who wrote himself indelibly into the history of the race when coaching Oxford to ten consecutive victories from 1976 to 1985, may this year turn the tables in what is expected to be the closest of races for years. He believes the attraction of the race is the absence of money.

"It is such a contrast," Topolski says, "from the money, money, money of most other sports. It is still absolutely amateur, it is still an event for students, it gives the public a sense of nostalgia, of times past. Yet it represents quality. The public recognises that several of these men will continue into international rowing and Olympic competition."

Searle did just that, being President of the winning Oxford boat which included Matthew Pinsent, in 1990 and then taking the Olympic coxed pairs title in 1992 with his brother, Greg, and Gary Herbert. He considers the Boat Race to be the experience of a lifetime.

"Banyoles [Barcelona] was the top, of course, because you're up against the best in the world, but I would recommend the Boat Race to anyone with the academic ability [to gain Oxbridge entrance]. With much of rowing, those who are aware of what you're doing are your mum and dad and a few relations. With the Boat Race, it's zillions, and a unique experience."

Searle continued: "I won, but, if I had been on my way up and had lost, I don't know if I could have handled it, the

disappointment. If you're already good, and lose, you'll probably recover. It has a unique position in rowing, with its crew ranging from novices to internationals."

In Searle's opinion, neither crew this year has the power to pull clear by Hammersmith — and thereby exploit the substantial advantage of the current on the Surrey side — so there could be the closest finish since Oxford won by a canvas in 1980.

Cambridge, who start favourites and have six men who have risen from winning Goldie (reserve crew) boats, know that Oxford are made of

sterner stuff than a year ago, when Topolski's string-and-sealing-wax job so adroitly camouflaged a weak position. Robin Williams, the Cambridge coach, acknowledges that it will be close.

"We've got to accord Oxford some respect," he says. "I think we're again the better crew, on the evidence of races against Imperial College and Nottingham, but the only way to find out is on the water. This crew is quieter than last year, but very determined, with the ability to maintain a fast rate [of stroke] over a long period."

Penny Chuter, who coaches Oxford alongside Topolski, considers this year's crew to be better balanced and integrated. "Cambridge have a continuity, from Goldie, which means they are more advanced early on," she says. "But we have more power this year, from a narrower range of individual ability, which means it is easier to coordinate and achieve rhythm."

Once again, it may come down to Topolski's ability to inspire his men. Oxford, by all accounts, have continued to improve over the past week, and much could depend on whether they have raised their speed off the start, critical if Cambridge draw the Middlesex station.

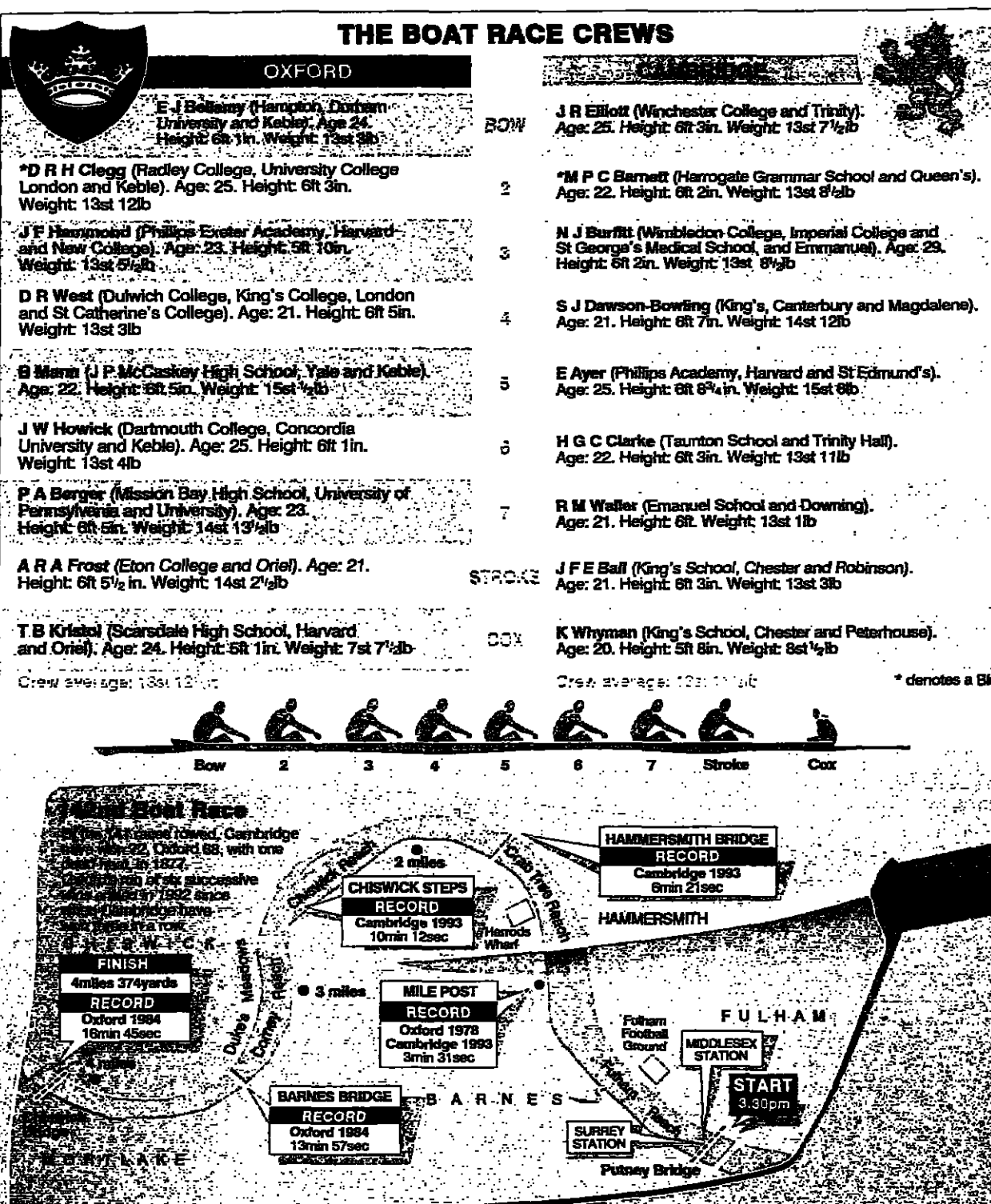
"As last year, it's been a race against time," Topolski says. "Trying to establish a style, or rather re-establish it, after a period in which Oxford's style had disintegrated. It is a question of first getting them

to believe in what they are doing, then getting them to sustain it when the pressure is on. We've now got a good finish to the stroke, but can they hold it?" Topolski is looking for moral leadership from Jeremy Howick, the Canadian at No 6 — relatively short, at 6ft 1in, but powerful.

The Boat Race shows the world what rowing is all about. To the television audience, the physical agonies of the individual are laid bare more than in any sport. There is no hiding place out on the water, under the eye of the camera.

"They are up and hungry," Topolski says of his men. "They've even a chance." Yet Cambridge are no longer in awe of this dynamic Oxford figure. Their under-23 gold medal-winners, who emerged from last year's Goldie crew, will be defying Topolski's optimism.

So will Nicholas Burfitt, 29, a veteran of two Olympic Games, who has responded to the appointment of being crew captain in the absence through injury of John Carver, the Cambridge President. Burfitt, reading medicine at Emmanuel, in particular has something to prove in the light of the criticism over the Cambridge rowing bursaries.



Police hats, page 1



Cambridge University prepare on The Tideway for the intense glare of public interest inevitably associated with the 142nd Boat Race

Cambridge favoured by smooth style

BY MIKE ROSEWELL
ROWING CORRESPONDENT

THE LATE John Snagge is remembered for his commentary in 1949: "I don't know who is in front, its either Oxford or Cambridge". The 142nd Boat Race has experienced observers guessing at the outcome today — Oxford are better than last year while Cambridge have, perhaps, more fragility than their immediate predecessors.

Oxford's more cosmopolitan line-up, including four Americans and one Canadian, put Penny Chuter, their coach, under more pressure this year. Robin Williams, at Cambridge, has had an easier assimilation: six of his oarsmen have been under his instruction for two years.

The coaches have worn a strained look since the Fours Head in November, when it was clear that the talent available was even. Although crews, not individuals, win Boat Races, pedigrees can be a pointer. Cambridge have five Great Britain under-23 internationals, Nick Burfitt, a veteran of two Olympics, and Ethan Ayer, a Henley winner.

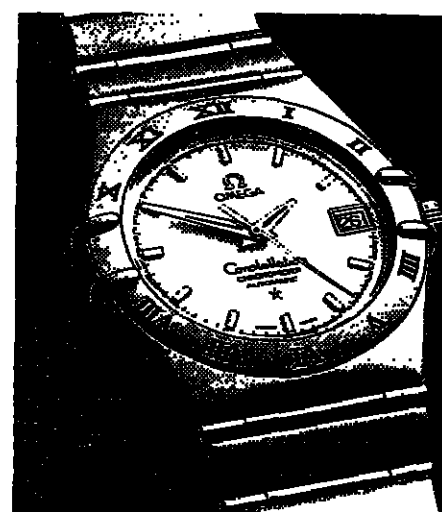
As a unit, Cambridge have shown tenacity when challenges have come in races with Imperial College and Nottingham County, a crucial factor in this being the steering of Kevin Whyman. But they are not the smooth, rhythmic, Cambridge of 1995.

Oxford have a slight edge in individual pedigree with two senior world performers, Britain's Damian West and Canada's Jeremy Howick. Ed Bellamy and Rob Clegg have Great Britain under-23 gold medals and Ben Mann achieved an under-23 bronze for America last summer. Paul Berger and Todd Kristol, the coxswain, have been on the fringe of the United States senior team.

Oxford's stroke, Adam Frost, a Great Britain junior international, combines gentility off the water with an obvious desire to drive his crew hard in the boat. This could be crucial to Oxford since Steve Royle, their rowing director, admits: "These guys love a scrap."

They will need to since Cambridge appear faster off the start and have marginally more run per stroke. Two inches on the 620 strokes involved during the race translates to an advantage of one and a half lengths. Then there are the unpredictables — the toss, the conditions, the coxswain's tactics.

Oxford did little yesterday; Cambridge added some pace to their start. Oxford will fight today and a battle seems likely to Hammersmith but Cambridge's smoother boat should ensure the favourites accept the Beefeater Trophy for the fourth successive year.



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Clinton approved Iran's secret arms deals with Bosnia

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CLINTON personally approved covert shipments of Iranian arms to Bosnia-Herzegovina two years ago, despite repeated assertions that America was abiding by a Balkan arms embargo and had pledged to isolate Tehran as a supporter of terrorism.

Two top American diplomats, acting on instructions from the White House and the State Department, are reported to have told Croatia's President Tudjman in early 1994 that the United States would raise no objection to arms being smuggled through Croatia and into Bosnia.

Long suspected by both Britain and France of turning a blind eye to shipments from the Middle East, and specifically Iran, the White House will suffer intense embarrassment over yesterday's revelations in the *Los Angeles Times*. At the time, America's allies involved in the United Nations protection force were concerned that a weapons influx could escalate the conflict and bring revenge attacks against peacekeeping troops. More immediately, the Administration, whose soldiers are with the Nato implementation force in Bosnia, has been confronted by a reinforcement of the Iranian influence it had tried to contain.

Larry Eagleburger, Secretary of State in the Bush Administration and a frequent critic of Mr Clinton's Bosnia policy, described the decision as "the height of insanity". He added: "We are inviting Bosnian Islamic connections with a terrorist state that wishes us as much damage as they can possibly inflict upon us."

The operation, which included the smuggling of anti-tank weapons, mortars, surface-to-air missiles, AK-47 rifles and ammunition, is said to have continued until January, even after the deployment of 20,000 American troops to the region.

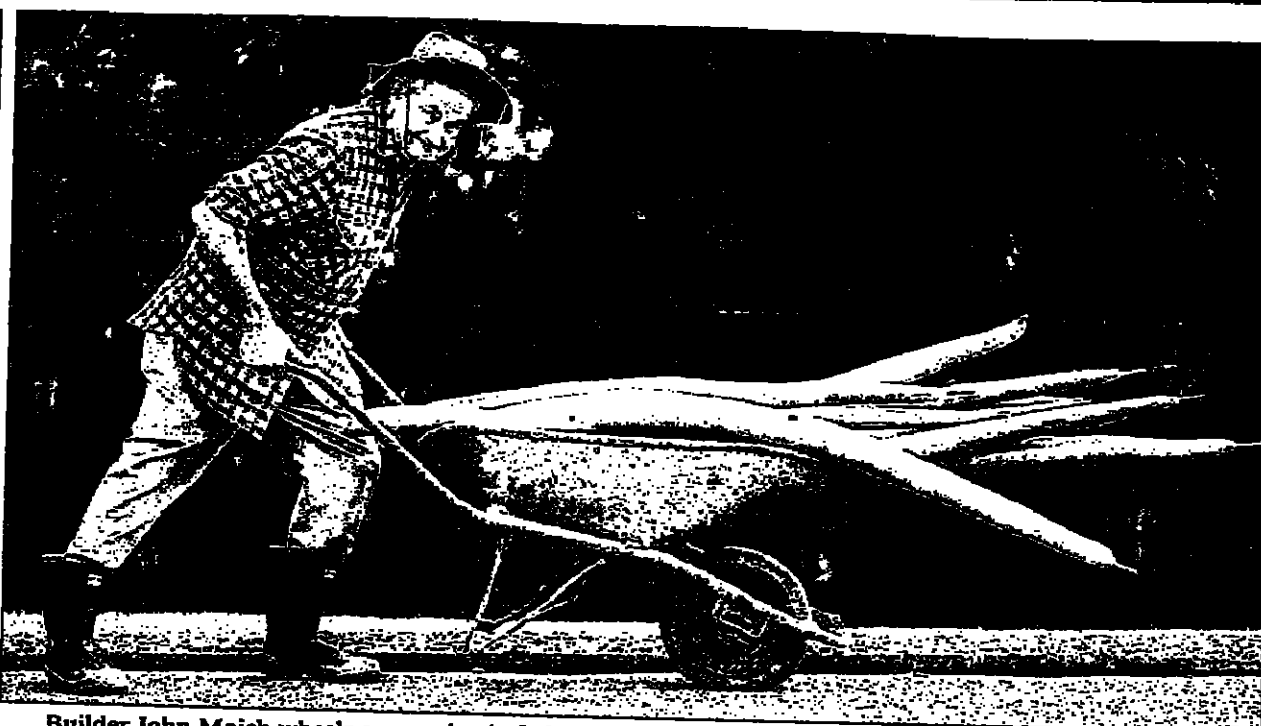
The White House offered a curt statement last night which did little to refute the allegations. "The United States has always maintained that it upheld the letter of the law and the requirements of the United Nations Security Council resolution [the arms embargo]," said one official. However, the report, a detailed analysis of how the operation was hatched, said Mr Tudjman had raised the prospect of secret weapons shipments with US diplomats in Zagreb and asked them to glean a response from Washington.

After consulting both Anthony Lake, the National Security Adviser, and Strobe

Talbot, the Deputy Secretary of State, the two diplomats — Peter Galbraith, the ambassador to Croatia, and Charles Redman, the special envoy — relayed the message to Mr Tudjman that there would be no American objection to the arms pipeline. Mr Clinton is said to have participated in the decision.

The shipments not only helped the Bosnian army, but were critical to the strength of the Croatian forces, which took a cut of as much as 30 per cent and whose Krajina offensive last year led to the fragile peace accord signed at Dayton, Ohio, in December.

The Iranian link which has grown as a result is now proving an obstacle to the implementation of the four-month-old peace accord. Despite repeated demands from Washington that the Bosnian Government expel Iranian military advisers, it has found little incentive to do so.



Builder John Maich wheels away a load of giant beans from his garden. His ambition is a 10ft-long bean

Jack and the giant beanstalk

JOHN MAICH is known to his friends as Mr Bean — justifiably so after breaking the world record with his New Guinea runners (Amanda Loose writes).

The biggest of the 400 beans in his back garden in Helensville, near Auckland, is 6ft 6in long with a girth of 14.5in. The previous record — 3ft 6in — was set in 1993 by a farmer from North Carolina. Unfortunately, the beans are "too tough to eat", says Mr Maich, who feeds his ambitions with tonnes of compost and heaps of manure. If you do that every day for five months, you are in business. His aim now is to grow a 10ft bean.

Rio police seize cache of cocaine-filled Easter eggs

FROM GABRIELLA GAMINI IN RIO DE JANEIRO

POLICE in Rio de Janeiro yesterday uncovered a cache of hundreds of ornately decorated Easter eggs stuffed with cocaine, just days after they announced their biggest haul of the drug during a raid on a house in the impoverished north side of the city.

The handmade chocolate eggs were filled with plastic bags of cocaine and according to police were meant as Easter gifts for "special clients".

The latest find has heightened fears that Rio has become South America's biggest transit port for drugs en route to the European market.

On Wednesday police confiscated a shipment of more than 500lb of cocaine and 1,500lb of marijuana in the northern district of Piedade. The

cochine was compressed into solid slabs but looked like salt bricks, which were due to be loaded on to a cargo vessel. They arrested a Peruvian, two Colombians and two Brazilians who are thought to have belonged to a regional cartel that ships cocaine into Europe via Rome and Amsterdam.

However, police confiscate only a tiny fraction of the cocaine that comes through Rio, and it is estimated that

more than 200 tonnes of the drug is transported through the city every year.

Rio's most notorious drug trafficker, Julio César Sabino, has been on the run for months and hides out in a densely-populated slum. Each time the police approach the shanty town armed gangs let off fireworks and rounds of ammunition to warn him of their arrival.

Brown's jet lacked latest landing aid

BY TOM RHODES

THE Air Force plane that crashed near Dubrovnik, killing Ron Brown, the American Commerce Secretary, and his party lacked a widely available modern navigational aid for landing in bad weather.

William Perry, the Defence Secretary, said defective instruments could have caused the accident in which 35 government officials, business executives and civilians perished after the T43A, the military equivalent of a Boeing 737, plunged into the 2,300ft Hill St John, two miles north of the runway in Croatia.

"It was a classic sort of accident that good instrumentation should be able to prevent," Mr Perry said. He did not specify, however, whether he was referring to instruments on the ground or on the plane.

The pilots were following a ground radio beacon with their radio magnetic indicator equipment when the

plane apparently veered off the normal coastal approach to Dubrovnik airport and flew through the nearby mountainous region.

Pentagon officials said yesterday that the modified Boeing was due next year to receive a global positioning system (GPS) that is one of the most reliable navigational aids for many military pilots. Had the plane carried a GPS, the pilots would have been able to pinpoint the runway in spite of the blinding rainstorm surrounding the Adriatic port at the time.

Instead those in the cockpit, Captain Ashley Davis, the commanding officer, and Captain Tim Schafer relied on a 1950s system, a non-directional beacon (NDB), that provides little information to the pilot and is subject to distortion in bad weather.

Last night, American officials in Dubrovnik confirmed that all 35 bodies had been recovered at the crash site and will be flown home today for formal identification.

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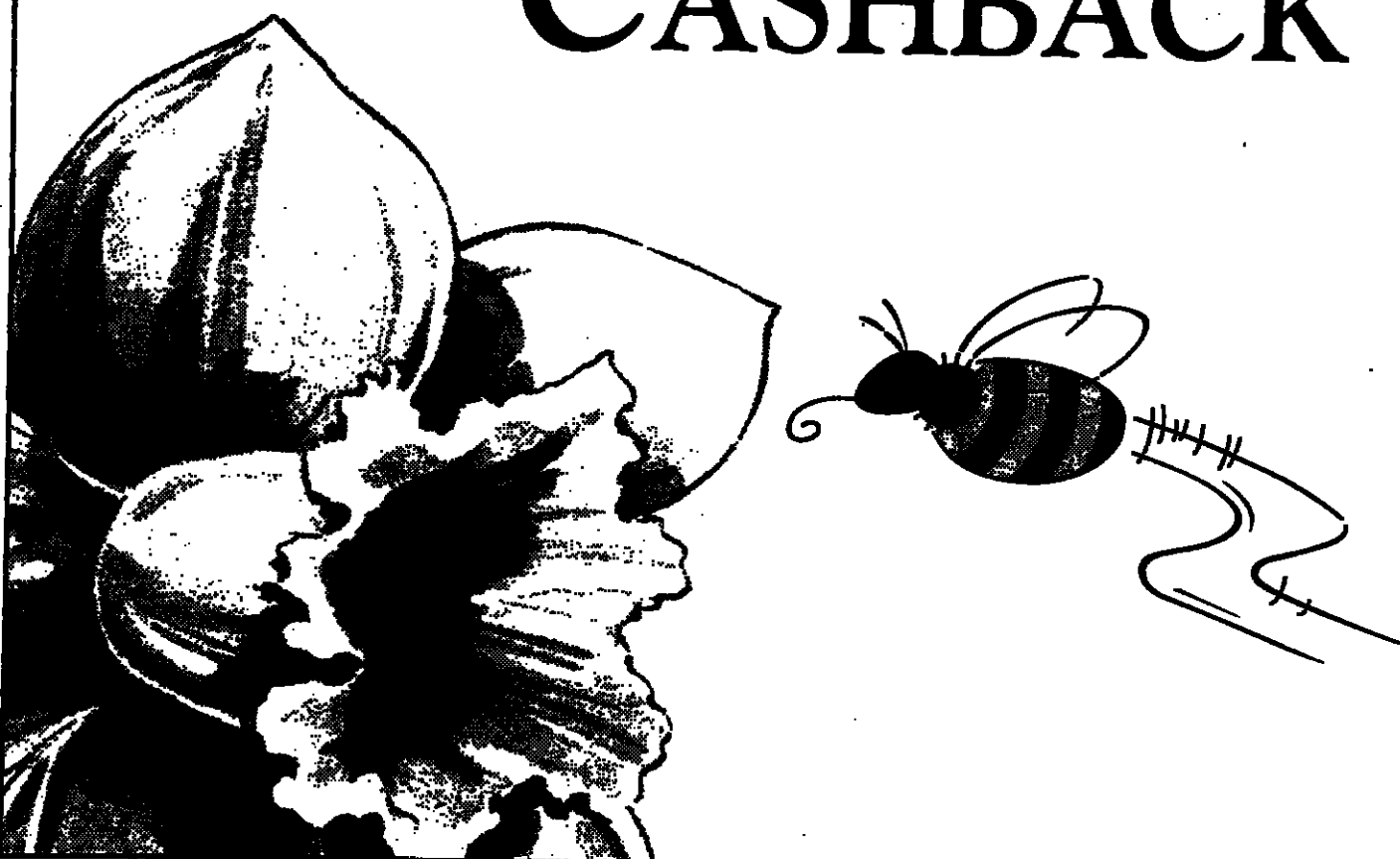
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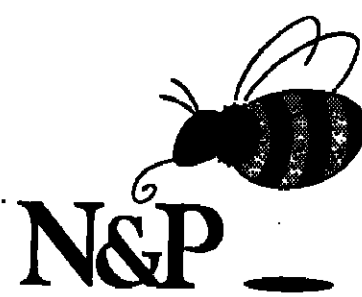


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Popular strongman in a wheelchair emerges from shadows as favourite to be next Chancellor

Kohl's prince in waiting

WOULD German voters accept a Chancellor in a wheelchair? The question may seem to be in dubious taste, but it is beginning to preoccupy the strategists and party plotters in Bonn as they look for a successor to Helmut Kohl.

Herr Kohl turned 66 last week and has been taking stock. If he is to step down before the 1998 elections he must appoint a successor within the next 18 months. Even if he intends to fight for re-election and step down shortly afterwards, the crown prince has to be identified soon.

The issue has been deliberately blurred by the Christian Democrats, and as long as Herr Kohl can win elections for them it is regarded as folly to talk about retirement. However, one man, trusted and respected by the Chancellor, has been emerging firmly from the shadows: Wolfgang

BERLIN FILE by ROGER BOYES



Schäuble. He is the real strongman of the party.

One problem: Herr Schäuble, shot by a lunatic in 1990, is paralysed from the waist down. The Chancellor does not regard that as an insurmountable problem. On a visit to his colleague after the assassination attempt, the German leader brought a biography of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. "But he had polio," Herr Schäuble said, "what I have is something completely different."

The 52-year-old southerner quickly recovered his confidence, however. He used an

adaptive wheelchair to train his upper body, recruited a young team of helpers, and persuaded the planners of the new parliament building to take into account his special needs. As Christian Democratic parliamentary leader — in effect, chief whip — he has been working 16-hour days and in his own opinion has shown "that I am fit for any job in political leadership". That phrase was the broadest hint of his true ambitions.

His popularity has grown over the past five years and he almost always comes near the top of opinion polls. In parliament

he is the master of the acid put-down. A book, dictated to friendly journalists, set out his concern with Germany's new national interests. That, too, caught the popular mood.

Since his days as Interior Minister (before and after the shooting) he has built up a useful reputation as a law and order man. Above all, he is a plant thinker and is capable of engineering new political alignments.

However, the question about his electability still hangs in the air. Modern statesmanship demands much travel and physical energy, sometimes when Herr Schäuble clenches his forehead during a speech it seems to television viewers that he is fending off pain.

These doubts can to some extent be sidestepped in the way that power is handed from Herr Kohl to Herr Schäuble. One idea is that the Chancellor fights the next election with Herr Schäuble chosen by Christian Democrat deputies as his successor, and later stands down to allow the new Chancellor to fight the following polls as the incumbent. So far the official line is strict silence. Herr Kohl has a talent for political timing and he knows that the politician who jumps too early jumps too short.



Wolfgang Schäuble who was paralysed by a gunman in 1990

Bread and water as carnivore carnival sours

THE fundamental fault line of German politics is between carnivores and herbivores. The hysteria about "mad cow disease" has forced politicians to take sides: to eat beef or eat broccoli. Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor, has once again demonstrated his shrewd sense of timing by going on an Easter diet, thus avoiding tabloid inquiries about the beef on his plate.

The first week of the crash diet allows the German leader to consume only water. During the second week he can eat two dry bread rolls a day and glasses of milk, but for the time being, no beef. Theo Waigel, the Finance Minister, has come out firmly in favour of the Sunday roast. The farmers' lobby in his native Bavaria is powerful and it would be folly for him to turn to veggie burgers at such a critical moment. Others are not so sure. Ursula Kinkel, whose husband, Klaus, is the Foreign Minister, is switching to fish for Easter lunch. Social Democrats mumble about the need to balance their diet or blame their defection from beef on vegetarian spouses and children.

The BSE scare is now so extreme that Germans are worried not only about chocolate, lipstick and jellybabes but also about leather shoes (the consumer hotline advises "don't eat them"). Die Zeit argues that if the entire beef herd has to be destroyed because of a dozen human deaths, then all Germany's cars should be scrapped in response to the 8,000 people killed on the roads every year.

The crisis is now a matter of political definition. Is it a patriotic duty to eat German beef? Will the butcher regard you as a coward and subversive if you do not shop as usual? There are no easy answers but remember, Hitler was a vegetarian.

Taking tough decisions at the top

NEW significance is being given to the term "summit meeting" by a group of intrepid German chief executives. Every year at about this time top managers like Hubert Burda, the publisher, Ulrich Cartellieri of Deutsche Bank and Jürgen Schrempf of Daimler-Benz duck out of view. Their secret is now out: they go on four-day mountain expeditions with the climber Reinhold Messner. Every year these captains of industry tackle a different summit.

Once they struggle to the top and pitch their tents the talk, according to Herr Messner, turns to how to save jobs, stimulate the economy and shake up Germany. Since the group also includes the chief executive of Lufthansa and the development head of BMW, it is clear that some powerful decisions are being framed in high places. Trade unionists, however, have not been invited to join this strangely Germanic club.

Space expert says obsolete shuttles risk astronauts' lives

FROM GILES WHITTELL
IN LOS ANGELES

NASA's space shuttle fleet is obsolete, expensive and a grave risk to those who fly in it, according to an aerospace expert who spent 23 years working on shuttle-related projects.

Likening the shuttle to "an

old house in Hampshire", Gordon Reiter, a former senior executive at Hughes Aircraft's space division, said the age of the spacecraft and the stress imposed on its thousands of components by each launch made an accident inevitable "sooner or later".

After recent technical hitches, including the failure of a

set of cargo bay doors to open automatically on its latest mission, NASA is seeking to raise public confidence in the shuttle before using it to start building the international space station next year.

The agency's public relations efforts will not be helped by Mr Reiter's remarks. As assistant director of Hughes

Aircraft's advanced government programmes division until retiring in 1989, he designed "Earth observation" instruments for the CIA as well as commercial communications satellites and supervised their installation.

"The shuttle is a '70s bird wearing out in the late 1990s," he wrote in a letter to the Los

Angeles Times this week. "Atlantis got home this time after many malfunctions, but for how long? In my estimation it will be only a short time until we kill ten or so more of our most capable citizens."

NASA is yet to respond to the letter, but has denied there was any pattern to its fleet's problems.

China tests views on handover

Hong Kong: China said it had received "many positive responses" from Hong Kong residents to an announcement it placed in the colony's press this week, inviting opinions on next year's handover (Tom Walker writes).

An official from the Peking-appointed Preparatory Committee, which placed the announcement, said there had been hundreds of calls on the telephone and fax lines advertised in independent English and Cantonese papers. He declined to discuss the content of the calls, however.

The committee is widely reviled in Hong Kong as the harbinger of a rubber-stamp legislature that will quickly stifle democracy. Local commentators have dismissed the attempt to canvass local opinion as window-dressing. It comes after a series of heavy-handed blunders by the committee that have wrecked public confidence in Peking's intentions.

Rangoon attacked over slave labour

By LEVIA LINTON

THE junta in Burma is using slave labour and relocating people to prepare the country for a planned influx of thousands of tourists this year, according to the Burma Action Group, UK.

The group's report quotes an estimate from Human Rights Watch/Asia that more than two million people, including children, have been forced to work with prison gangs. Scores have died during the building of the infrastructure for tourism, according to the action group's report.

Tourism is booming in Burma as visa restrictions have been relaxed. More than 95,000 people visited Burma last year, compared with 9,000 in 1992. The military dictatorship hopes that more than 500,000 tourists will visit this year and it has declared 1996 "Visit Myanmar [Burma] Year".

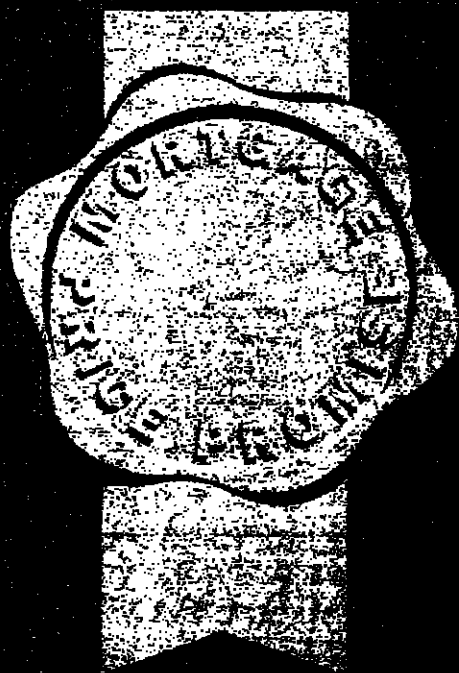
Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel peace prize winner and

leader of the opposition party which won the 1990 election but was denied power, urged tourists to keep away. Daw Suu Kyi, who was placed under house arrest for six years, said: "Those foreign businessmen, who come here to strike up deals while ignoring the reality, should know that we are all suffering. They need to be reminded that this is one of the most brutal military regimes in the world and putting money into the country now is simply supporting a system that is severely harmful to the people of Burma."

Yvette Mahon, of the action group, said: "People should be aware that by visiting Burma they are lending legitimacy to a cruel and greedy regime, damaging the democratic movement that struggles to combat it, and sanctioning the abuse and suffering of Burma's people, many of whom have lost their lives in the name of tourism."

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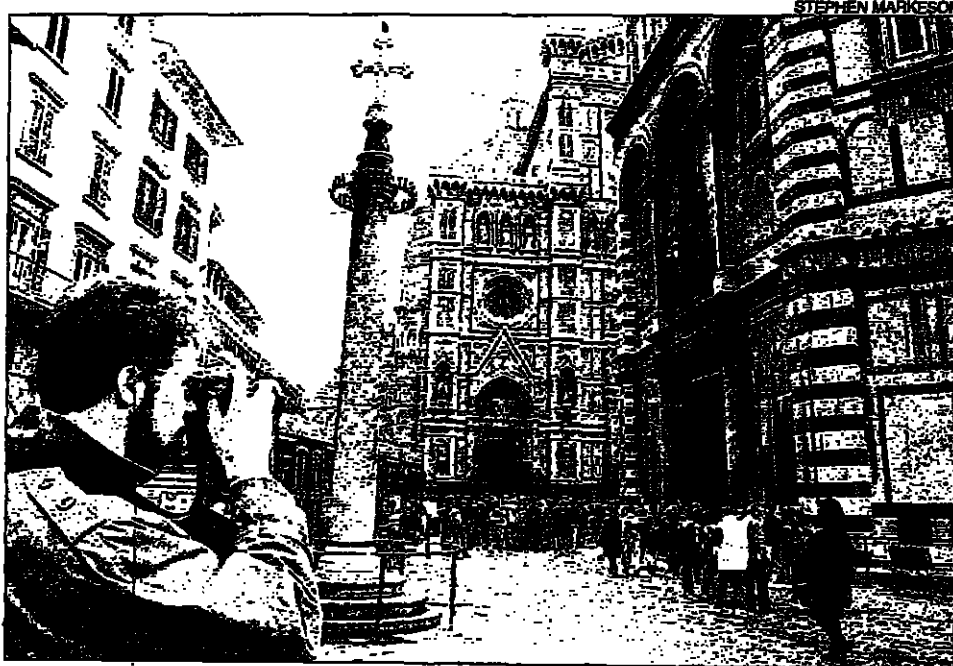
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Tourists gather to admire Brunelleschi's masterpiece, the marble cathedral in Florence

Florence strategists defend city from tourist invasion

By RICHARD OWEN

AS THE spring invasion of Tuscany gets under way, the authorities in Florence are planning "drastic measures" to limit the number of visitors allowed into the city centre.

The Renaissance marvel celebrated by authors from Browning to E. M. Forster still exerts such magic that it is in danger of submerging under a human tide, attracting 50,000 people a day. Tourist coaches visiting the centre have risen to 500 daily and are often double and triple-parked along the Arno river and in the ancient squares clustered round Brunelleschi's great

while at the same time making Florence a welcoming place.

Queues for the Uffizi museum this week have been half a mile long — with the Easter weekend still to come. "There is a human wall of German and Japanese tourists, not to mention noisy school parties," noted *Corriere della Sera*. "The museums of Florence cannot cope." Most are understaffed and some are only open part-time.

The authorities fear the city's problems will get worse when the European Union holds two summits in Florence in June.

The city was chosen, in part, because it is the home town of Lamberto Dini, the Prime Minister. One official said: "1996 will be the year the museum city becomes an international showcase."

Signor Cecchi said that from May 1 the number of coaches allowed into the

centre would be cut to 150 a day and they would need permits. A limited number, costing £40, would be available in advance, and two checkpoints would be set up at motorway exits from the north and south to examine permits. Most coaches will have to park in two new areas on the outskirts as part of a park-and-ride scheme.

He added that city authorities were planning an overhaul of the transport network for 2000, with a fleet of electric buses in the centre and a new tramline linking the outskirts to the railway station.

Authorities in Venice said yesterday that they were also being overwhelmed by tourists, with a million and a half visitors recorded last year to the Doge's Palace and St Mark's Square. That makes the centre the second-most-visited tourist site in Italy, Pompeii being the top attraction.

Handwritten note: 2000/04/06



■ OPERA
David Freeman's powerful vision of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* is revived at the Coliseum



■ BASE NOTES
Sadler's Wells assembles the stars for one last song and dance before the old theatre comes down

THE TIMES ARTS



■ BASE NOTES
Next to be given the Hollywood bio-pic treatment is legend of soul, Otis Redding



■ BASE NOTES
Eleanor Bron will star in the British premiere of Terrence McNally's *A Perfect Ganesh*

New life in Baroque of ages

OPERA

Orfeo Coliseum

It is right and proper for an opera company to keep just about the oldest surviving example of the genre in its repertoire, and David Freeman's production of the Monteverdi *Orfeo* (1607) has been doing sterling service at ENO for 15 years. It does not look like it. In Hayden Griffin's non-specific Levantine setting, it is both of its time — 1981, high noon of Freeman's Opera Factory challenge to the norms of staging — and curiously timeless, and Freeman is always on hand to tidy and tighten the focus.

Anyway, the proof is in the eating: Saturday's audience at the Coliseum was gripped by the steady unfolding of the drama, growing restless only at the long, long mime sequence for Charon at the opening of the Styx scene, and the slow, slow scene change needed to cover the company changing their frocks for the last act. There is, I think, a new *aperçu* in some byplay with a "false" Euridice (a chap, as it happens), and I am still puzzled by Freeman seeing Hades only as a setting for much heavy petting. But the sheer discipline of the production and the 20-strong ensemble's execution of it are beyond dispute.

Musically this is one of the strongest showings the ENO *Orfeo* has enjoyed. Not only does Nicholas Kok draw gorgeous sounds from his Baroque orchestra, but he achieves an ideally fluid, natural musical and dramatic pace. He appears not to hurry, but still manages to knock nearly 20 minutes off the advertised running time. You



Guy de Mey (Orfeo) and Yvonne Barclay as Euridice in English National Opera's evergreen old-stager *Orfeo*

are left wanting more, which is not inevitably the case with Monteverdi. The Belgian tenor Guy de Mey, something of a Baroque specialist, was making his house debut in the title role. He has a big, warm voice, projects easily even when singing on a thread of sound, and his English is clear and instantly communicative — indeed, the way he coloured the words of Anne Ridler's excellent translation showed

up one or two of his English-speaking colleagues, some of whose delivery was a touch mechanical. Not Yvonne Barclay's crystalline Euridice, however, nor Nerys Jones's perky Proserpina, nor Harry Nicoll's urgent Second Shepherd. And Sarah Connolly whistled into the Messenger's narrative with a passion to match the first great dramatic paragraph in operatic history.

The American bass Brian Matthews was an ink-toned Charon, and the young company tenor Mark Le Brocq (Spirit and Echo) is coming on by leaps and bounds, with gleaming, rock-solid tone in his brief utterances. So, *Orfeo* as living drama, not an exercise in historical piety: the near-400 years are bridged effortlessly.

RODNEY MILNES

A FAMOUS London theatrical landmark is celebrating the end of an era in June. The 65-year-old Sadler's Wells Theatre launched the careers of some of the most illustrious performers in Britain — John Gielgud, Laurence Olivier, Margot Fonteyn — but later this year it is being torn down to make way for a new purpose-built dance house. The historic farewell will be marked on June 23 with a gala. Opera and ballet stars are promised, although the line-up has not yet been announced. Following the performance is a gala dinner; there will also be a sale of opera and dance memorabilia. Tickets range from £10-£30.

SOUL legend Otis Redding is to be the subject of a bio-pic, *Blaze of Glory*, written by Joe Eszterhas (of *Batman* fame). Eszterhas may not seem the ideal person to deliver a knowledgeable screenplay on the late singer, but he can claim to have been a *Rolling Stone* writer in the American magazine's earliest days, and was the last person to interview Redding before his death in an air crash in December 1967. Work on the film begins this summer, though the title role is still to be cast.

THE British actress Eleanor Bron seems to be enjoying something of an American season. She will follow up her current assignment in Edward Albee's *A Delicate Balance* at the Nottingham Playhouse with the British premiere of American writer Terrence McNally's *A Perfect Ganesh* at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds. Bron will

BASE NOTES

Curtain at the Wells

play the role originated off-Broadway by Zoe Caldwell.

THE conductor Libor Pesek, who already considers himself something of an "honorary Liverpoolian", is now an honorary knight. The music director of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra was granted an honorary knighthood by the Queen during her recent visit to Prague. Pesek was rewarded "in recognition for services to British interests". The 62-year-old Czech conductor has been with the RLPO since 1987.

NEXT month sees the directorial debut of Peter Brook's daughter, Irena Brook, who is directing *Beast on the Moon* at the BAC in London, which opens on May 14. Richard Kalinoski's play tells of two Armenian immigrants in 1920 Milwaukee.

NEVER one to shy away from controversy, the British actor Nicol Williamson is returning to Broadway. The last time he was there he played to newsworthy effect in *Hate Hamlet*, where he routinely ad libbed, delivered impromptu curtain speeches and, at one performance, nicked co-star Evan Handler

with a sword. His vehicle this time around is his solo show *Jack — A Night on the Town* with John Barrymore, which he played in the West End two summers ago, amid equally contentious circumstances. That was the play where he walked off stage just minutes into the second performance, leaving his audience to wander off home. Broadway, one hopes, will go more smoothly. Opening night is April 17.

IN A bid to promote the art of song, Wigmore Hall is to play host to the first International Song Competition in September 1997. With song often overshadowed by its big sister opera, the art form can seem something of a Cinderella, say the organisers, and they are hoping to help to put that right with this new competition. Sponsored by the Kohn Foundation, it will take place every two years, and is open to singers and accompanists of all nationalities, with an age limit of 32. The first prize is £12,000 and a recital date at the Wigmore Hall. Judges include the sopranos Dame Margaret Price and Elisabeth Söderström, along with the renowned German tenor Peter Schreier.

OASIS songwriter Noel Gallagher is to meet the King of Smooth, Burt Bacharach, after the band's forthcoming appearance in Santa Monica on April 14 — with a view to writing a song together. The Britpop star is an enthusiastic fan of the veteran composer. Elvis Costello has beaten Gallagher to the punch however, having already written and recorded a song with Bacharach.

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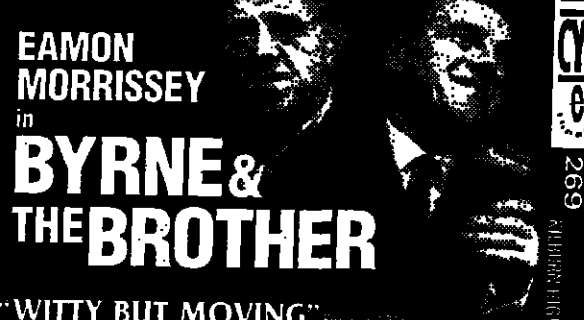
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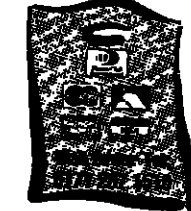
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■ CHOICE

Times critics select the best entertainments for the Easter weekend: see Weekend, page 2

**PRODUCTION - MORE COMIC
THAN MOST D Mail**

Managing modern marriages

The State should not subsidise divorce, says Sheila Lawlor

The legislation that most unsettled the Tory backbenchers in the parliamentary term just ended has been divorce law reform. It provoked a spate of moralising, some of it from the most unlikely sources. But modern marriage is a more complicated matter than their moral certainties allow. For better or worse, in our generation traditional marriage has been transformed by social and economic change. This weekend, as the Government institutes reforms to the taxation system to foster self-reliance, some thought might now be given to other financial reforms which could genuinely stabilise relationships.

In the past, we are told, marriage was for life. But then, life itself was shorter. Indeed, the chances of premature death removing one spouse meant that the Grim Reaper, rather than choice, often brought change. Moreover, marriage was less intense. Men and women could lead quite separate lives: the expectation was of worlds conjoined but distinct. Friends and the wider family tended to have a more prominent part in a couple's life than now. Nor had the Puritan streak run to its novel twist that unfulfilled expectation or infidelity must lead inevitably to severance.

Rapid social changes, many dating back only to the 1960s, have changed this picture, sometimes victimising those whom they aimed to liberate. Education, especially of women, has altered the framework of marriage. Whether women are themselves employed, with a measure of independence, or whether they stay with their babies, is often determined by finance. Our high-tax society means that without a rich husband (or wife), two incomes are needed to keep the roof over the family's head or, at least, to escape the desolate subsistence which is all one income would allow. And though full-time careers need rests, full-time mothers cannot have rests unless they can afford to pay for help, and certainly have no chance to develop other interests, in the way that many educated women in the past would have done.

Moreover, ladies with high expectations of life and love tend to be less tolerant of the human nature of their husbands: imperfect beings, the subjects of fatigue, moods and monosyllables. Wives and husbands expect to be not mates but soul-mates: talk and companionship beyond the marriage may often provoke resentment or suspicion.

Those changes in marriage today show that the relations between the incidence of divorce and the legal arrangements for it are complicated and ill-served by simple, moralising debate. There is, however, one important certainty which almost every party to the discussion will acknowledge: divorce on its present scale has a bad effect on those involved and deleterious long-term effects on the children. Must we simply accept these socially damaging consequences of a high

divorce rate as the unfortunate result of modern ways of life?

A little reflection on the role of government in divorce, not as legislator but as financial provider and policymaker, suggests one course of useful action.

Government has not deliberately encouraged divorce, but one of the unintended effects of legislation has been to remove many of the financial constraints which would otherwise make divorce unattractive. The public coffers have facilitated divorce, both through free legal aid and through benefit payments. Or, where the divorcing couple are better off, the State uses its authority to ensure that dependent spouses continue to be supported, even if it is they who, as a result of changed feelings or aspirations, have insisted on divorce.

So a wife, tired of a husband who, whatever his faults is neither cruel nor persistently unfaithful, can initiate proceedings, at public expense, in the knowledge that she will keep her children, her house and an income, courtesy of the taxpayer or her abandoned husband.

The State has, in effect, removed the balance of deterrents within marriage: interest and sentiment no longer hold each other in check.

How can the State develop a policy which, while providing for those in need, does not encourage decisions which lead to dependency? A first step would be to ensure that the State no longer stacks the public purse, or policy, behind the alternative arrangements which fashion made its own in the last three decades. Even if divorce is now to be granted without blame, this should not mean that questions of responsibility do not count in reaching a financial settlement.

Financial subsidy must become the last resort, not the first. Man and wife must, as in the past, take full account of the financial cost of separation and the State must not weight its powers in favour of those who wish, without the very strongest reasons, to make choices they cannot afford.

There will always be the hard cases where separation follows abandonment or brutality. But hard cases are a fraction of our divorce statistics. A policy of responsible neutrality would demand that those determined to divorce would have to pay for it themselves, from the cost of proceedings to that of maintenance. Men and women would be seen to be married to each other, not to the State.

Whether divorce law makes or breaks marriage will remain a question debated between those who believe the law reflects change and those who say it shapes change. By tackling divorce through the power of the purse, we would be on surer ground, and the problem would become the difficult but tractable one of achieving a proper balance between encouraging responsibility on the one hand, and on the other tailoring benefits to those who, despite their own best efforts, need our help.

Sheila Lawlor is director of the think-tank *Politica*.

Paul Barker on the relevance of *Gulliver's Travels* — Channel 4's Easter television highlight

Swift's satire still wounds today

The corrosive pungency of *Gulliver's Travels* stands alone in English literature. Jonathan Swift's satirical onslaughts are as vivid as the day they were written. 250 years ago, the murderous border quarrels of the Lilliputians; the scientific and medical panics that terrify the gullible inhabitants of the floating island of Laputa; the Struldbrugs who live longer and longer, without any of the benefits of eternal youth; all come ferociously close to the contemporary bone.

Swift had the undoubted eye of an outsider. Like Gulliver, he was, in a sense, marooned for much of his life. Dividing his time between Ireland and England, he belonged to neither. Anglican families like his were top dogs in Ireland, but back in England, they were only colonialists. Swift spent most of his unhappy public career trying to balance these two lives.

His outsiderishness is one of the aspects that appeals to us now; this, and his many psychological scars. Both Swift and Gulliver are flawed heroes. As described by Swift, Gulliver's voyages are by no means jolly romps. Gulliver feels real fear and revulsion when confronted by the bizarre societies of midgies, giants or hyper-intelligent horses, which parody the England he left behind. You wonder what deep terrors the story hides, that give it its strange force. Swift was born after his father's death. In his infancy he saw little of his mother. At the age of one he was

kidnapped by his nurse and taken to the Cumbrian coast, where he stayed for three years.

Swift's relationships with women can only be called perverse. To attack the King and his ministers was, in Swift's day, dangerous and sometimes fatal. Now it is the small change of television comedy. But it is his misogyny that brings readers up short. He was obsessed by the contrast between bodily beauty and other bodily functions. In Swift's most notorious poem, parodying the languid eulogies of the day, a lover explains why he has decided to abandon his mistress:

Nor wonder how I lost my Wits:
Oft Celia, Celia, Celia shuns

He uses obscenity to wing his satire home. Gulliver saves the land peopled by rational horses, the Houyhnhnms. He praises their perfectly organised, dispute-free society. But how are we meant to take this? These fabulous horses offer an impossible ideal. The dream of a society without conflict is a recipe for tyranny, as the French and Russian

Revolutions were to show. Was Swift putting a layer of irony even over his closing recommendation?

Given the tenor of his other writings, he almost certainly was. The Irish dimension can never be forgotten in Swift. The warring islands of Lilliput and Blefuscu, divided by their ludicrous quasi-religious quarrel about which end to open boiled eggs, recalls England's angry involvement with Roman Catholic Ireland. When the floating island of Laputa clouds the sky over its exploited colony of Balnibarbi, Swift recalls England's oppressive rule. And when the Houyhnhnms claim that life would be fine if the loathsome Yahoos were only be as civilised as they are, they epitomise the attitudes of colonial rulers down the centuries: in particular, the English Protestant rulers of the native Irish.

Swift's most celebrated prose satire, apart from *Gulliver's Travels*, is his pamphlet *A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Ireland*

from being a Burden to their Parents or Country. It is the most ferocious dozen pages ever written in English. He suggests that instead of neglecting and exploiting their tenant landlords should treat them tenderly as cattle. The children should be fattened up and sold for food. This would cut down numbers of Catholics, reduce overcrowding and give Ireland a new profitable trade.

He works out his proposal with mad logic of Himmler deciding on final solution to the Jewish question. But for the taboo against cannibalism, Swift's proposal made a lunatic sort of sense. The landlords in English Parliament were shown the brutal implications of their policy towards Ireland, the reverberation of which have not yet died away. Gulliver tells the King of Brodingnag about the patriotic glories of English history. The only people who are ever right are the English. The King is repelled. He says: "cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth." Like going out in the driving rain, there is a kind of exhilaration in being exposed to such unremitting scorn.

Paul Barker's book on the contemporary relevance of *Gulliver's Travels* (Channel Television, £4.95) accompanies the film version, on Channel 4 tomorrow on Monday at 6pm.

The cleansing of Vermeer

The Dutch painter's exhibition enhances the reputation of an accessible genius inspired by love

Per ardua ad Vermeer. I have seen the show. This month the highways to The Hague must rank with the ancient roads to Vézelay and Compostela. Pilgrims through the tented camp outside the Mauritshuis, Trinker-sellers and ticket touts jam the streets of the Dutch capital. This is no giant blockbuster, more a viewing of sacred relics. Just four rooms form a shrine for 23 of the 36 surviving Vermeers. They are packed.

To some, the crush has stripped the paintings of their tranquillity. The critics have declared that Vermeer is a painter of silence who should be worshipped calmly, preferably in solitude. At The Hague, for every inch of Vermeer there is a yard of humanity. Unless you are a giant, each picture can only be seen cropped and framed by heads and shoulders. The exhibition is part Vermeer, part jostling, pushing, restless crowd.

Yet I found the pictures radiated serenity through the hubbub. The homage paid in these modest drawing rooms should exhilarate Vermeer's admirers. The popularity of the show (which ends on June 2) is unmatched in its intensity. No other artist has contrived, in a few intimate pictures, to touch the nerve of an age as Vermeer has ours. Art has become the religion of a secular society and these are among its most precious icons. The *Girl with a Pearl Earring* is truly the modern Mona Lisa.

The Hague has also been a field day for Vermeer conjecturalists. There are barely 40 known facts about Vermeer and less than a dozen contemporary "sightings". In this kingdom of the blind, guessing is a game that all can play. Not only have three of the masterpieces been specially cleaned — most gloriously *The View of Delft* — but so has Vermeer's image. The array of accompanying literature lays to rest the "Old" Vermeer, the brooding, solitary genius of Delft, poor, unrecognised and unpatriotic. Gone is Vermeer as stylistic loner and private experimentalist. No, he did not paint through a camera obscura. No, he was not first discovered by a French critic in the 19th century.

The New Vermeer was a distin-

guished burgher of Delft. His paintings were expensive, his reputation assured and his legacy respected. Only a recession brought about his final bankruptcy. The breathless Mauritshuis press release lists eight "new facts" revealed by the show (a claim hardly borne out by the catalogue). But there is no politics like art history politics. One man's wild conjecture is another's certainty. The dozen of Vermeer conjectures, Arthur Wheelock, has become almost a medium for conveying the "message" to the modern world.

So I, too, arrived at The Hague with conjectures under my arm, ready for testing. Who are these ethereal Vermeer women to whom the experts constantly refer in the plural? Every critic denies they are portraits, but sees them as distant, idealised females, transcending time and place. Having decided that Vermeer's message is thus depersonalised, critics must assume his women are mere receptacles of light and colour, like the pearls in the

Woman Holding a Balance. Some assert that the six apparently pregnant models are not pregnant but wearing farthingales. Others assure us that the girl studies, or trones, cannot be portraits. By such conjectures, Vermeer is distanced from the public. Interpretation is kept the property of a critical priesthood, as if art appreciation requires biblical exegesis.

The only discussion of Vermeer's models that I have found is in a 1950 essay by the Dutch critic, Swillens, and another by André Malraux. Coupled with what we know of Vermeer's domestic life from the American scholar, John Montias, I have little doubt that the model for all Vermeer's mature female studies was his wife Catharina, and for the girls, his two eldest daughters, Maria and Elizabeth. The maid throughout was the family's faithful Tanneke Everpoel. I find this suggestion robust and incorrigibly interesting. Yet it is not mentioned in any of the catalogue material, despite a mountain of conjecture on everything from the moral significance of Vermeer's portrayal of drink.

We know more or less for sure that Vermeer had no studio or pupils, left no drawings or notebooks and signed only a handful of his works. There is little evidence of a market for his pictures during his life. All this is consistent with an artist who painted mostly for his own interest and pleasure. An expert in Italian Old Masters, he was intrigued by the new science of optics. Two pictures he did sign, *The Geographer* and *The Astronomer*, appear to be portraits of his friend, the scientist Van Leeuwenhoek, an identification corroborated by a known portrait of the man. Vermeer, in other words, did portrait studies.

We also know that Vermeer married for love, against the wishes of both his own and his wife's families. He even converted to Catholicism to do so. After seven years he and Catharina went to live in Delft's



From Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring*: a modern Mona Lisa

Catholic ghetto with his mother-in-law, Maria Thins, in what must have been a desperately crowded house. The couple had 11 children. This was extremely rare in 17th-century Holland where, as Simon Schama has shown, small families were the rule even among Catholics. We can deduce that this was an unusually close family. Catharina was pregnant throughout their married life (Vermeer died at 43) and it mystifies me why critics are so keen to debunk the pregnancy shown in at least six Vermeer paintings (but not in pictures by his contemporaries).

More to the point, as we can see so vividly in *The Hague*, the faces of the mature women are virtually identical, with strong chin, widely-spaced dark eyes and swept-back hair. His younger models — including the girl with an earring — bear so strong a family resemblance that it seems

perverse to exclude the probability that they are Vermeer's daughters. The two eldest were teenagers by the time of his death in 1675 and Maria was already married. She would have kept the blue dress that she (in my view) wears in three of *The Hague* pictures: it is the one garment in these pictures not listed in his posthumous inventory.

Each of these girls has the same direct stare at the viewer, the open faintly Oriental visage. Tanneke, the maid, is quite distinct, a strong heavy-featured character in each of her portrayals. If Van Leeuwenhoek and Tanneke are portraits, why not the pictures of Catharina and the girls? These pictures are surely intimate portrayals of familiar faces as a father might do of his family, not for sale but as keepsakes. We know that Catharina was especially attached to both *The Geographer* (a Kenwood) and the *Art of Painting* (Vienna), which she desperately tried to rescue from a bankruptcy auction. One reason might surely be that the latter showed Vermeer himself in the act of painting one of the daughters.

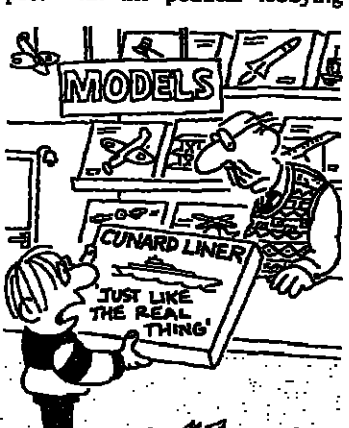
Of all the impressions that I brought away from The Hague exhibition this was the most powerful of a family resemblance more vivid than I had seen in any reproductions. Of course this is conjecture, but of the mass of conjecture that surrounds Vermeer, this seems both reasonable and an aid to the enjoyment of his work. I see him not as a man locked in a room, apart from time and place, beckoning silently down the centuries. I cannot recognise Lawrence Gowing's man "drawn away from his time to express the least expressible meanings of humanity", a clinical observer who neither laughs nor cries but only sees.

My Vermeer is a brilliant part-time artist, intrigued by the science of painting, but inspired to paint by familial love. Just as the pregnancy pictures are Vermeer's homage to Catharina, so the portraits of the girls are surely his homage to family life. His daughters play music, gazing at their father with a directness rare in Dutch art. He plays his own sort of accompaniment, a sonata of light and colour. These are pictures suffused with marital passion and paternal affection. *The Girl with a Pearl Earring*, her mouth open as if about to speak, her eyes full of innocent expectancy, is an image wholly of today. Its appeal rests in its power to communicate the love of a father for a daughter, the most timeless yet vulnerable love of all.

That is what I see. But the joy of Vermeer is that you may see something quite different — and say to hell with the critics.

Joy all round

LABOUR's former director of communications, the terrifying Joy Johnson, is making a surprising return to politics. Bloodied and ousted from the Labour machine after some backstage tussles with Peter Mandelson, MP for Hartlepool, Miss Johnson has taken up a post with the political lobbying



"Haven't you got one that floats?"

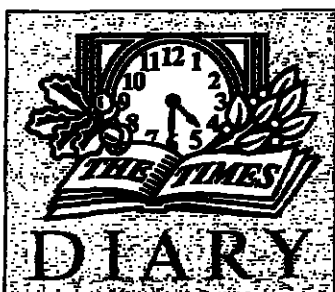
firm APCO UK, a company stacked with Tories.

Luckily, she has had a clause written into her contract that specifies she will not have to work with clients who might bring her into conflict with her dearly held left-wing principles.

One of life's door-slammers, Miss Johnson earned her fearsome reputation as the political news editor of the BBC, having been the first woman shop steward in the whole ITV network. John Major used to complain that she made him feel like a criminal when she used to doorstep him in Downing Street.

A close friend of Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, APCO has taken her on to advise on media and communications strategy, something she did with mixed results for Tony Blair.

When she utters her pencils, she will find herself working as a consultant alongside Martin Savner, a former member of Margaret Thatcher's policy unit, Angie Bray, former press secretary to Chris Patten, and Simon Milton, one-



time deputy leader of Westminster City Council.

Sadly, despite the career move, the really juicy stuff will have to wait. Miss Johnson was sworn to silence on the story behind her acrimonious departure from Walworth Road, as part of her severance package.

● *TODAY'S Boat Race* presents its organiser, Duncan Clegg, with an intriguing conflict of loyalties. His son, Rob, is president of the Oxford boat. "It's the first time such a situation has arisen," says Duncan, who was himself an Oxford president 30 years ago. "I'll give him a pat on the back before he gets to the boat but I shall try to remain absolutely impartial until the flag comes down. Then, of

course, I shall revert to the usual tribal loyalty."

Sounded out

BAD luck continues to dog the orchestra of La Fenice, Venice's opera house. First the opera house burnt down just days before it was due to reopen after refurbishments. Now the orchestra faces eviction from its temporary home, St Mark's Basilica, after complaints that its playing is too loud.

One of the city's chief curators recently called off a concert, having decided that the fortissimo wind passages in Mahler's Second Symphony might rattle the Basilica's mosaics. He went on to explain that music itself was not the problem, only works of such "intensity".

Sliding scale

BBC news bulletins have become a must for a certain type of middle-aged woman. The attraction? Edward Stourton, the newscaster. In recent months, there has been a noticeable thinning around the Stourton jewels and belly. Svelte is not quite the word, but he definitely has less of the all-in wrestler about



Ang Lee: doughnut crazy

him these days. Trips to the gourmand's desert of Eastern Europe for BBC2's *Correspondent* may have something to do with it. Admiring colleagues in the news room, however, tell me that having decided to lose weight, Stourton has shown a steely determination to shed the pounds gradually. Stourton's postbag has swelled as his girth has diminished and

viewers, especially female ones, are showing their appreciation of the new streamlined image.

The metamorphosis has even attracted the attention of the Prime Minister. At a recent party, John Major remarked on Stourton's weight loss, adding "and about time too".

● *TAIWAN'S* greatest living film director has become addicted to Devon-made doughnuts. While directing *Sense and Sensibility* in Devon last year, Ang Lee discovered the pleasures of the Swiss iced doughnut at a small bakery in Plymouth. Now working in New York, Lee has just placed an order with the bakery for 150 of the cakes to be dispatched at speed across the Atlantic to the set of his latest movie.

Stitched up

FASHION NEWS: Norma Major's favourite dress designer is to marry. Louisa Tyler, 30, who also makes frocks for the busier members of the racing crowd, learnt her darn from her *denier* cri in Sister Isabel's needlework classes at St Mary's Convent, Ascot. Her future husband is Mark



Sewn up: Louisa Tyler

Platt, a corporate gift salesman. Miss Tyler, daughter of a former Governor of the Tower of London, met Platt when they were working together at Tiffany's, the jewellers.

Miss Tyler refuses to say whether her most famous client will be coming to the wedding. "I'm leaving all that to my mother," she says. She will, however, be making her own wedding dress.

P.H.S

SOCIAL NEWS

Today's royal engagement

The Duchess of Kent will attend the Oxford and Cambridge University boat race, Putney, SW15.

District Judges

Dick Greenfield has been elected President of the Association of District Judges. Godfrey Evans is senior vice-president and Michael Hawthorne junior vice-president.

Weekend birthdays

Lord Frederick Windsor is 77 years old today.

TODAY: Mr Franta Belsky, sculptor, 75; Sir Paul Bressford, MP, 50; Miss Joan Bernard, former Principal, Trevelyan College, Durham, 76; Mr Rodney Bickerstaffe, trade unionist, 51; Miss Anne Campbell, MP, 56; Miss Joan Carville, soprano, 65; Mr Bernard Carter, painter and engraver, 76; Mr Harry Conroy, former trade unionist, 53; Mr Roger Cook, investigative journalist and broadcaster, 53; Mr Paul Daniels, magician, 58; Admiral Sir Desmond Dreyer, 86; Mr Julian Faber, former chairman, Willis Faber, 79; Mr Francis Hall, writer, 67; Professor David Ingram, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Kent at Canterbury, 69; Mr Justice Knox, 71; the Duke of Montrose, 61; Lord Moore of Wolvercote, 71; the Rev Ian Paisley, MP (MEP), 70; Mr André Previn, KBE, conductor, 67; Sir Marcus Worsley, Lord-Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, 71.

TOMORROW: Mr Dennis Amis, cricketer, 53; Viscount Brentford, 63; Miss Fredda Brillante, sculptor, 88; Mr Jean Collings, actress, 54; Mr John Ford, film director, 57; Mr Gerry Goffe, composer, 57; Sir Geoffrey Cox, former Editor and Chief Executive, ITN, 86; Mr

Appointments

Mr Brian Walsh, QC, to be a Circuit Judge. He will be assigned to the North Eastern Circuit, to be the Senior Circuit Judge in Leeds from May 1 in succession to Judge Savill, QC, who is retiring on April 30.

Mr Robert Wakefield and Mr Philip Cull to be Circuit Judges, assigned to the South Eastern Circuit.

Church news

Appointments

The Rev William Atkins, Rector, St George's, St Mark, Hanover Square (London), to be also a Prebendary of St Paul's Cathedral. The Rev Alexander Benfield, Assistant Curate, St Luke, Battersea, to be Curate, Holy Spirit, Clapham Team Ministry (Southwark).

The Rev Joyce Birrell, Assistant Priest, St Giles, Rowley Regis, to be Priest-in-charge, St Mark, London (Birmingham).

The Rev Margaret Blackall, Priest-in-charge, St Andrew, Great and Little Glemham (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich), to be Rector of that benefice.

The Rev Peter Brown, NSM, St Mary the Virgin, Kemp Town (Chichester), to be Chaplain in the United Bristol Healthcare Trust (Bristol).

The Rev David Burrell, Priest-in-charge, Haughey Wethered and Stow Upland, St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, to be Priest-in-charge, Colkirk, Woking and Parnsey, Whitson, Horningloft, Bristley, Great Ryburgh and Little Ryburgh and Testerton, Galesley, and Sherford, Dumton (Norwich).

The Rev Susan Emage, formerly Curate, St Paul, West Bromwich (Lichfield), to be Honorary Assistant Curate, Holy Trinity, Stapleton (Bristol).

The Rev Jacqueline Fox, Curate, St Mary, Aston (London), to be Rector of that benefice.

The Rev Stephen Gough, Vicar, St David, Chidwell, to be also Lay Development Officer, with special responsibility for Parish Councils (Liverpool).

The Rev Joseph Hawes, Curate, Clapham Team Ministry, to be Team Vicar, St Michael and All Angels, Barnes (Southwark).

The Rev David Hildred, Curate, Rayleigh (Chelmsford), to be Vicar, St Andrew, Sidcup (Rochester).

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Who put flowers on enemy graves? Poignant ceremony links wartime opponents

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

MORE than 50 years after a Lancaster was shot down over Belgium, killing four of the crew, a special ceremony takes place today at the site of the crash to commemorate the last flight of bomber ED 840 from 156 (Pathfinder) Squadron.

British and Belgian Second World War veterans will gather with some of the families of the Lancaster crew as a one-fifth scale model of the bomber is unveiled in the town of Lier on the spot where the aircraft hit the ground on the night of June 16-17, 1943. It is now a children's playground. The memorial was paid for by donations from local people.

The ceremony will also underline a poignant historical link between the Belgian town and a village cemetery in England where for 20 years the wife of a local headmaster secretly placed flowers on the graves of four German airmen whose Dornier bomber was shot down on July 9, 1943. The Dornier 217 which had been responsible for a bombing raid on a cinema at East Grinstead in Sussex, killing more than 100 people, was brought down near the Surrey village of Bletchingley.

No one knew who was placing flowers on the enemy graves but in 1962 the bodies were exhumed and transferred to an official German war cemetery at Cannock Chase in Staffordshire. The woman was Eva Dobson.



Sergeant Ronald Dobson, whose mother hoped that someone, somewhere would tend his grave

mother of Sergeant Ronald Dobson, the navigator on board the Lancaster that crashed at Lier. He and three other members of the air crew died - Squadron Leader John Cameron McKintosh, the pilot, Flight Sergeant Peter Woodcock, wireless operator, and Flight Sergeant Eric Monk, a Canadian rear air gunner.

The three who survived, Sergeant Reginald Drinkwater, flight engineer, Sergeant Eric Weare, bomb aimer, and Sergeant Leonard Lederman, mid-upper air gunner, were taken prisoner. All three are now dead. The Lancaster was one of 200 that set off to bomb

Cologne. Thirteen others were lost in the raid. Mrs Dobson placed flowers on the German graves at Bletchingley because she hoped that "someone, somewhere" was doing the same for her eldest son, Ronald. After he was reported missing, no one knew where his body had been buried.

It was not until 1991, ten years after Mrs Dobson's death, that a connection was made between the two wartime crashes. A letter arrived at Bletchingley post office from a Belgian called Wim Goverts living in Lier who was researching the Lancaster crash and trying to trace the relatives of the British crew. He had come across the name of Flight Sergeant Dobson.

Mr Goverts, a local historian, succeeded in tracing all the next of kin of the Lancaster bomber crew and, backed by the Mayor of Lier, organised today's ceremony. The memorial takes the form of a nose-down model of a Lancaster with the wing embedded in the ground. Local children will be able to climb in and sit in the cockpit.

John Price, of Bomber Command Association, which will be represented at the ceremony in Lier, said: "It is both inspiring and comforting that our allies should be moved to subscribe for a memorial over 50 years after the event."

Latest estates include (net, before tax): Mr Herbert George Gordon Thompson, of Wokingham, Berkshire, £771,227. Mr Richard Martin Thorpe, of Southborough, Kent, £636,917. Mrs Maud Towson, of Denham, Buckinghamshire, £563,332. Lella Isabelle Tyler, of Bourne, Lincolnshire, £371,155. Mr Brian Arthur Van Zwan, of Maidenhead, Berkshire, £370,656. Mr John Henry Weaver, of Wel-

land, Wiltshire, £359,699. Mr Edmund Thomas Montague White, of Sunbury on Thames, Surrey, £308,451. Mr Frank Arbery Williams, of Burford, Oxfordshire, £1,095,823. Mrs Jeanne Marie Madeleine Winstone, of London W1, £916,132. Mrs Natalie Winifred Virginia Wolf, of Amersham, Buckinghamshire, £371,155. Mrs Agnes Worrall, of Dudley, West Midlands, £531,028. Agnes Margaret Young, of Sheffield, South Yorkshire, £583,779.

Weekend anniversaries

Forthcoming marriages

Mr W.G. Banks-Martin and Miss G.A. Chamberlain. The engagement is announced between George, younger son of the late Mr John Banks-Martin and of Mrs Banks-Martin, of Bath, and Georgia Armo, daughter of Mr and Mrs Peter Chamberlain, of Newland.

Mr J.E.W. Moulder and Miss S.A. Mitchell. The engagement is announced between John, only son of Mr and Mrs Michael Moulder, of Hyndland, Glasgow, and Sheila, younger daughter of Dr and Mrs Michael Mitchell, of Sandstead, Surrey.

Mr D.D. Nicholas and Miss E.T. Mulholland. Mr and Mrs Michael Mulholland, of Burwash, Sussex, are pleased to announce the engagement of their only daughter, Erika, to Dr David Nicholas, son of Mr and Mrs David Nicholas, of Oakville, Canada.

Mr N.R. Pugh and Miss S.E. Payne. The engagement is announced between Nicholas, son of Mr and Mrs D.R.G. Pugh, and Samantha, daughter of Mr and Mrs C. Payne, both of Molesey, Surrey.

Mr C.E. Serrano and Miss E.K. Sackdale. Mr and Mrs Derek Sackdale, of Eltham, London, are pleased to announce the engagement of their youngest daughter, Emma Kate, to Charles Edward, younger son of Mr and Mrs John B. Serrano, of Mapperley Park, Nottingham.

Mr M.N. Stephens and Miss L.J. Martin. The engagement is announced between Jonathan, eldest son of Mr Jonathan Stephens and Mrs Sheila Stephens, both of Ewbury, Surrey, and Laura, daughter of Mr and Mrs Eric Martin, of Charn, London.

Mr I. Taylor and Miss A. Latham. The engagement is announced between Ian, son of Mr and Mrs John Taylor, of Retford, Nottinghamshire, and Angela, younger daughter of Sir David and Lady Latham, of Sunningdale, Berkshire.

Marriage

Mr A. Millar and Mrs S. Youngblood. The marriage took place on Saturday, March 30, 1996, at Abingdon, Hampshire. The bride, Mrs S. Youngblood, daughter of Mr and Mrs Adam, Somerset, and Mrs Susan Youngblood, of Kilmeston, Hampshire.



Rory Bremner, the impressionist, is 35 today. Felicity Palmer, the mezzo-soprano, is 52

Royal Fine Art Commission

Lord St John of Fawley has been appointed chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission. Miss Sophie Andrea, Mr Edward Cullinan and Mr Edmund Hollinghurst have been appointed members of the commission in succession to Lord Mark Grouard, Mr John Winter and Mr James Sutherland.

Priory School, Banstead

The Old Boys' Reunion at Priory School, Banstead, will be on Saturday, June 6, 1996. For further details contact the School on 01737 354479.

Latest wills

Lady Violet Mary Teresa Briscoe, of Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, left estate valued at £4,763,366 net, the late £2,000,000 to her husband, Mr David Charles Briscoe, of Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, and the residue to her children, Mr David Charles Briscoe, of Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, and Mrs David Charles Briscoe, of Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire.

Mr William Dickson, of Ilkley, West Yorkshire, finance director of Granada Television, 1976-82, left estate valued at £223,300 net, the late £223,300 to his wife, Mrs William Dickson, of Ilkley, West Yorkshire.

Mr David Charles Briscoe, of Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, left estate valued at £4,763,366 net, the late £2,000,000 to his wife, Lady Violet Mary Teresa Briscoe, of Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, and the residue to her children, Mr David Charles Briscoe, of Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, and Mrs David Charles Briscoe, of Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire.

Church services for Easter Eve and Easter Day

BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL: (Today) 7.30 Vigil, Sun. 11.15 HC, Rev S. Hogg, 6.30 Rev D. Townsend. (Tomorrow) 11.15 HC, Rev S. Hogg, 6.30 Rev D. Townsend. (Today) 7.30 Vigil, Sun. 11.15 HC, Rev S. Hogg, 6.30 Rev D. Townsend. (Tomorrow) 11.15 HC, Rev S. Hogg, 6.30 Rev D. Townsend.

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OBITUARIES

ROBERT NICHOLL

Robert Nicholl, Benedictine monk, civil servant in Sarawak and church historian, died on March 16 aged 85. He was born on March 27, 1910.

A diligent historian with an enthusiasm to spread his knowledge to others, Robert Nicholl spent many years of his life working to improve education in the Far East, first in Sarawak and then in Brunei. He was the last European to be recruited into the Sarawak Civil Service by the White Rajahs — the English Brooke family to whom Sarawak was ceded in 1841 by the Sultan of Brunei.

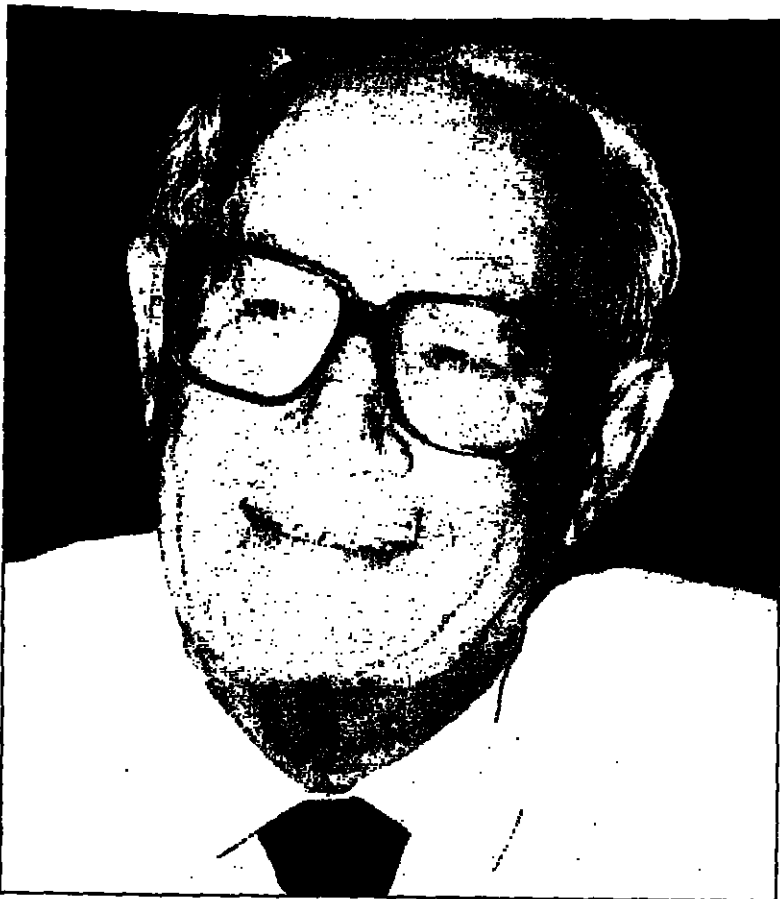
But less than a year after Nicholl's arrival in Sarawak in 1945, the third Rajah, Charles Vyner Brooke, finding himself without the will or the finances to rehabilitate a state ruined by Japanese occupation during the Second World War, handed Sarawak back to the British.

As a civil servant Nicholl did much to improve education in Sarawak, most especially in his capacity as education officer for the Fourth and Fifth Divisions of the state, a territory about the size of Wales in which the river systems of the Barisan and the Limbang were the only highways and travel was by boat and jungle path. Nicholl was responsible for the spread of schools among the many colourful but still primitive native tribes. Later, recruited to the capital Kuching, he was put in charge of state-wide examinations and also organised an examinations syndicate at School and Higher School Certificate levels.

When he moved to neighbouring Brunei in the late 1960s he was put in charge of the history department of a government school. But he devoted his spare time to the study of the history of the country. Previously this had largely depended on local legend and myth.

From researches into the accounts of ancient Arab and Indian traders and the records of the Imperial Courts of China, together with inscriptions from old gravestones and royal tombs, Nicholl became convinced that Brunei had once been the centre of an important thalassocracy whose power reached the coast of Eastern Malaysia, Indo-China and the Philippines, besides those of the island of Borneo. He posited that a disaster such as the Black Death — which had later reached Europe in 1348 — had accounted for its calamitous decline.

Rifling through the archives of



museums, he searched out references to Brunei among the accounts of travellers, Jesuit missionaries and Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch traders and mariners. He assembled a complicated web of correspondents who passed their discoveries on to him and eventually, in 1989, he completed the second volume of his *Sources of Brunei History*.

Robert Nicholl was actually baptised Thomas Brian Nicholl, but when he joined the Benedictines he was given the name Robert — after a Jesuit scholar whose biography was being read aloud in the refectory. Thereafter he used it exclusively, even in correspondence with members of his family.

He was not born a Roman Catholic. Both his parents, though they came from Dublin, were Methodists. On the outbreak of the First World War the family moved to England where his father acted as locum replacing doctors called up into the Army. Though this necessitated frequent moves around the country, the young Robert eventu-

ally found himself at a private school in Twickenham, where an outstanding history teacher imbued him with an enthusiasm for the subject which was to last for the rest of his life.

Nicholl developed a particular interest in medieval church history and in 1927 returned to Ireland to study at Trinity College Dublin. There he met Frank Duff, the founder of the Legion of Mary, and under his influence Nicholl subordinated his academic studies to social work among the poor. He also converted to Catholicism.

In 1929 he joined the community of Benedictine monks at Buckfast Abbey where he continued to pursue his historical interests. With Father Norris, who was to become a world authority on the subject, he made a survey of the stained glass in continental cathedrals and worked on documents in the abbey library. He was ordained priest in 1935 and was sent to St Benet's Hall, Oxford, to read for a degree in History.

Four years later, with the outbreak of

the Second World War, Nicholl became a chaplain and was attached to a field ambulance in France, narrowly escaping from St Nazaire after the German breakthrough. Transferred to the Middle East, he was attached to the Guards Brigade and later saw action with the Long Range Desert Group. But the bloodshed of the North African campaigns had disturbed him profoundly, and resigning his commission as chaplain, he enlisted in the Army as a private, rising eventually to the rank of captain in Army Intelligence.

After the war, remembering a conversation he had once had about Sarawak, and convinced that he could be useful there, he applied for a post and was recruited by Anthony Brooke, then heir apparent to the third Rajah. Arriving in Kuching as the Australian Military Administration was withdrawing, he became first director of education and then, after Sarawak was ceded back to the British, a divisional education officer. Though something of a recluse by nature, he was also involved with the revival of the Sarawak Turf Club, riding in hunting plunk in race meeting processions and undertaking the testing of horses for doping. At the age of 55 he was given the job of turning Tanjong Lobang School, the principal government secondary school, into a sixth-form college, which he did within three years. It had high educational standards and an impressive library.

When he retired, Nicholl left Sarawak and moved to the adjoining territory of Brunei where, after teaching English for a while, he was put in charge of the history department of the major government school, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin College. He also became an honorary curator of the newly opened Brunei museum, a position which he used to help him with his historical researches.

Nicholl returned to England only in 1989. He settled in Worcester, where he pursued his interest in medieval monastic history in the cathedral library, translating manuscripts in collaboration with Professor Ivan Greatrex, a noted medieval monastic scholar.

A slight stroke in 1992 necessitated retirement to Steyning with a large library of books. He managed to make a pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1993 and was reinstated as a priest by the Vicar General who thus regularised his clerical status. But any hopes of resuming his priestly duties were now beyond him physically.

HERB HALL

Herb Hall, jazz clarinetist, died in San Antonio, Florida, on March 6 aged 88. He was born in Reserve, Louisiana, on March 28, 1907.



HERB HALL was one of the last survivors of the first generation of jazz clarinetists. His family, from Reserve, Louisiana, was one of the few dynasties of early jazz not to come from New Orleans itself. His father, Edward Hall Senior, played in the Onward Brass Band in the town, and most of his eight children went on to be musicians. The second son, Edmond, became world-famous as the clarinetist with Louis Armstrong's All-Stars. But three other brothers, Robert, Clarence, and Herb, were all successful clarinetists and saxophonists and played with many of the greatest names in jazz and blues from the early 1920s onwards.

Herb Hall started by playing the banjo but soon moved on to the clarinet. This remained his principal instrument, although he often played alto or baritone saxophone in his early days. He was a master of the old Albert-system clarinet, never moving to the more modern Boehm fingering, and retaining the strong, rich tone associated with Louisiana creole clarinetists. In later life he inherited the instrument used by Edmond until his death in 1967. But although Herb played it in his brother's memory, there was little stylistically in common between them. A six-year difference in their ages meant that Herb did not hear his brother play until he arrived in New York for a brief visit in 1936, by which time he had been a professional musician for more than a decade, and had forged a musical style of his own.

Herb Hall's first professional job was with Kid Augustin Victor in Baton Rouge, in whose band he replaced his brother Clarence in 1926. He then went on to join one of New Orleans's most famous orchestras led by the trumpeter Sidney Desvigne, playing aboard Mississippi riverboats such as the *Capitol* and the *Island Queen*. In 1929 he met the charismatic trumpeter Don Albert and agreed to join his territory band initially for a long engagement at the Texas State Fair in Dallas.

Albert's band became one of the leading jazz orchestras in the South and West, moving from Dallas to San Antonio, which became its base until it broke up in 1934. Through broadcasts from the Chicken Plantation and Shadowland clubs, Albert's band picked up a great local following and in 1936 made eight records, featuring Hall as well as the New Orleans pioneers Alvin Alcorn and Louis Cottrell.

They toured in a band bus over the dirt roads of the territories, and endured many of the privations of black bands on the road. "Travelling was hard, because there were no black restaurants or black hotels," recalled Hall. "The bus had trouble climbing mountains in Virginia and Kentucky... the brakes couldn't hold it from slipping backwards. When that happened we'd jump out and grab large rocks we had ready on the back of the bus to chock the wheels. We called ourselves the 'rock squad'."

After the Second World War, Hall came to New York, and his brother (who led the band at Café Society) pulled strings to get him into the local branch of the Union. Soon Herb had regular work with the trumpeter Herman Autrey and the pianist Sonny White. He first became known to European audiences when he travelled to France in 1956 with Sammy Price, and subsequently returned many times.

although he did not appear in Britain until a solo tour in the spring of 1981. He came back that autumn and again the following year with Bob Greene's World of Jelly Roll Moreton — a repertory band with whom Hall had played at the Newport Jazz Festival.

In America, Hall established himself as house clarinetist at Eddie Condon's club in New York, and he also worked with the trumpeter Bobby Hackett and the pianist Don Swell, with whom he later made a quartet record in New Orleans. Hall made surprisingly few records under his own name (*Old Time Modern* made for Biograph in 1969 is a masterpiece). But he appeared on many sessions led by others, including Doc Cheatham and Sammy Price.

In the 1970s he moved back to San Antonio, where he had met and married his wife Annie in 1931. He travelled to New York, Canada and Europe for solo engagements, but gradually retired, preferring to run his large garden — his vegetable garden was his greatest happiness in later years — and practise the yoga and meditation to which he attributed his long and healthy life. A stroke in the early 1980s affected his vision and ended his playing career.

EDGAR SOMERVILLE

Edgar Somerville, orthopaedic surgeon, died on March 9 aged 82. He was born in 1913.

AN OUTSTANDING figure among the postwar generation of surgeons, Edgar Somerville played an important part in helping to develop orthopaedic surgery from a modest medical speciality into the largest branch of the surgical tree. His most famous contributions were papers on the treatment of congenital dislocation of the hip.

One of the first people to advocate a direct surgical approach to this, his "Somerville" method, involving a process of excision, was taught to scores of surgeons from all over the world. Treatment was completed in about three months and the success rate was high. This contrasted with the long years of splinting and the uncertain outcome of conservative treatments previously used.

These studies led Somerville to an interest in surgery of other hip disorders and he was among the first to practise of "jointy" the cutting of the bone into two parts followed by a realignment of the two ends — for Perthes disease (an inflammation of the head of the thigh bone). All his ideas were brought together in the book *Development of the Hip in Childhood* which he wrote in retirement in 1981.

Edgar William Somerville was born the son of a general practitioner. He was educated

at Shrewsbury School, at Cambridge and then at St George's Hospital, London. He qualified as a doctor in 1938 and joined the Royal Air Force as a medical officer, serving at home and in the Middle East. He was demobilised in 1946 as a wing commander and, after two years at the orthopaedic hospital at Oswestry, he was appointed Consultant Surgeon at what was then the Wingfield Morris Hospital in Oxford. In the autocratic manner of those days, his appointment was made without an interview by the hospital's founder, G.R. Girdlestone.

Somerville first made his name as co-author, with Girdlestone, of the second edition of the book *Tuberculosis of Bones and Joints* (1952) and for the next 30 years he was always in the forefront of British orthopaedics. He gradually developed into a specialist in the treatment of children's deformities but never gave up his interests in other aspects of surgery.

The children whom he treated for congenital dislocation of the hip were never discharged from his care, most being examined personally once a year in Oxford at clinics which soon became study sessions on skeletal development. Miniaturised radiographs, meticulously mounted on a large cardboard sheet, told the story of each child's hip. Like frames from a cinematograph, the yearly films were used to teach the importance of the



fourth dimension in paediatric surgery. To maintain these records, patients were relentlessly pursued and with the spread of an international network of Somerville trainees, escape was almost impossible, even by emigration. The unique archive which resulted is maintained to this day and mothers who were themselves treated in infancy now bring their own babies to the clinics.

Somerville had studied scoliosis deformity of the spine — an abnormal lateral curvature of the spine — even before he went to Oxford and this was the subject of one of his most

penetrating insights. His theory that the deformity resulted from lordosis — a forward curvature of the lumbar spine — which led to rotation was ignored for nearly 40 years, but was resurrected in the 1980s when methods of treatment based upon it were successfully applied.

Somerville had an international reputation as a teacher and during the last 20 years of his professional life he travelled the world, visiting more than 35 countries as a lecturer and visiting professor. His real enthusiasm, however, was for those places where he

felt he could actually do something, rather than just talk about it.

He played a leading part in setting up the first orthopaedic service in the Sudan and visited Khartoum regularly to supervise it. In 1964, with assistance from Barbara Castle's Ministry of Overseas Development, he set up an orthopaedic service and training programme in Burma and visited Rangoon regularly even after his retirement.

At home he was editorial secretary and then vice-president of the British Orthopaedic Association. He also served as president of the orthopaedic section of the Royal Society of Medicine, the British Orthopaedic Research Society and the ABC Orthopaedic Club.

However, Somerville never lost touch with a masterful ability to practise what he preached. Able to perform operations with amazing speed and accuracy, many who saw him practise as a surgeon considered him the most accomplished operator they had ever seen.

Outside his profession, Somerville pursued his leisure recreations with as much energy as he devoted to his work. At university he was awarded Blues for hockey and tennis. He played golf to a handicap of six. In the 1960s he also took up sailing and cruised the coasts from Copenhagen to southern Brittany. In retirement he travelled and played golf and though his joy in sailing receded after the death of his wife Margaret in 1981, even up till a few weeks before his death he could be found applauding from the touchline at his grandsons' sporting efforts.

Edgar Somerville is survived by his daughter.

REGINALD RIMMER

Reginald Rimmer, GC, died in Colwyn Bay on February 21 aged 93. He was born in Chester on November 21, 1902.

AT THE time of his death Reginald Rimmer was the oldest living holder of the George Cross. Always a strong supporter of the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association, he regularly attended their reunions until in recent years old age prevented him from travelling.

Rimmer was awarded the Empire Gallantry Medal (translated to the George Cross in 1941) for his service with the police in India. The citation, published on June 3, 1931, read: "Sergeant Rimmer was decorated for one act of gallantry, but because on numerous occasions he showed great courage and coolness. His pluck and presence of mind evoked the highest praise from his superiors and he consistently set a fine example to the constabulary under him."

Rimmer had joined the Indian police in Bombay in 1927, having before that followed an exclusively service career. He enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery in Wales in 1918 while still only 16. He got round the

age regulations by presenting the birth certificate of a brother (who had been killed at Passchendaele).

It did him, however, little good for he promptly became one of the first victims of the 1918 flu epidemic. At the Royal Artillery depot in Woolwich they failed to diagnose the symptoms and Rimmer came near to death, his weight going down to seven stone. As he recuperated, he was posted to the Royal Army Medical Corps, helping with bringing the wounded home from France. After the Armistice, however, he was medically discharged as "not attaining the physical standard required for HM Forces". He refused, though, to be deflected and in 1919 re-enlisted, this time in the Cheshire Regiment, serving with them throughout the Black-and-Tan period in Ireland (he was selected for "special detachment duties" and was under canvas in the winter of 1920-21, catching pneumonia as a result).

He was then posted to India where he remained with the Cheshire Regiment until 1927, when he joined the India Police (Bombay) which he left in 1939. At the outbreak of the Second World War he rallied

to the colours again, serving with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers until 1942 when, in the light of his Indian experience, he was transferred to Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (Civil Police). He served initially in Tripolitania and then, from 1945 to 1950, in Eritrea, becoming attached to the mounted Frontier Striking Force and acting as a liaison with the Corpo Carabinieri Regimento Reale (he spoke Italian fluently).

In 1950 he returned to the Regular Army and served in the East Africa Pioneer Corps, being involved both with the campaign against the Mau Mau in Kenya and in the ill-fated Anglo-French expedition to Egypt in 1956 designed to reassert Western control of the Suez Canal.

He finally retired to Chester in 1958, where he became a court usher until forced to retire again at the age of 65 in 1967. He lent dignity to any court in which he appeared, having preserved an erect military bearing and standing no nonsense from anyone.

Reginald Rimmer married Lucy Barley in Chester in 1934 when he was home from India on eight months' leave. He is survived by her and by a daughter.

PERSONAL COLUMN

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PUBLIC NOTICES

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THE TIMES

BIRTH AND DEATH NOTICES

To place your Birth or Death Notices over the Easter Holiday period please call during the following times:

Saturday 6th April 9.00am - 12.00pm
Monday 8th April 9.30am - 2.30pm

Tel: 0171 680 6880. Fax: 0171 481 9313

General MacArthur

... When in 1917 the United States went to war, MacArthur became Chief of Staff of the Rainbow Division, in which, according with his own suggestion, every State in the Union was represented. In France his personal courage was outstanding. Returning to the United States in 1919, MacArthur became the youngest man to be appointed commandant at West Point; in 1930, once again the youngest to hold so high a post. He was appointed Chief of Staff of the Army with the rank of General. His warnings about the need for preparedness were disregarded, and in 1937 he retired from the army. In July 1941 President Roosevelt recalled MacArthur to duty and appointed him commanding general of the Far East command. When in December the Japanese mercilessly bombed Manila ten hours after the attack on Pearl Harbour, all that MacArthur could hope to do was to gain time. Ordered to transfer his headquarters when further resistance became

ON THIS DAY

April 6, 1964

General MacArthur was a charismatic leader, who, it was said, could reduce strong men to tears by his eloquence. His obituary reflected the whole range of a full career. This extract covers the period for which he is best remembered in this country.

useless, he escaped to Australia in a motor-torpedo boat. As he landed he proclaimed with a characteristic touch of egotism and flair for publicity: "I have come through and I will return." As supreme commander of all allied forces in the south-west Pacific, he became one of the greatest military figures of the war. He was awarded the Congressional Medal and in 1944 was made General of the Army. A year earlier he had been made an honorary GCB. Once the Japanese offensive had been brought to a

halt, his "island-hopping" return to the Philippines began. By October, 1944, MacArthur was able to announce at Leyte: "I have returned", although it took until May 1945 to complete the reconquest of the islands. He was appointed military governor of Japan after the capitulation, and remained there six years, hastening the transformation of a feudal society into a modern democratic state. When South Korea was attacked MacArthur enthusiastically supported President Truman's decision to go to its aid in the name of the United Nations. His letter to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, however, showed that he was out of sympathy with the Administration's policy... Its refusal to allow him to bomb bases in China became an embittered political controversy. Despite warm invitations from President Truman to return to the United States he refused until he was recalled. He had not seen his country for 14 years; he had become out of touch with American opinion. MacArthur was relieved of all commands in April 1951.

THURSDAY APRIL 6 1996

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ICES DISTANT NEEDN'T BE STANT.

GAMES



Win six £100 prizes on the Jumbo Crossword

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Through the markets and mosques of Syria

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GARDENING



Free guide to the finest gardens in Britain

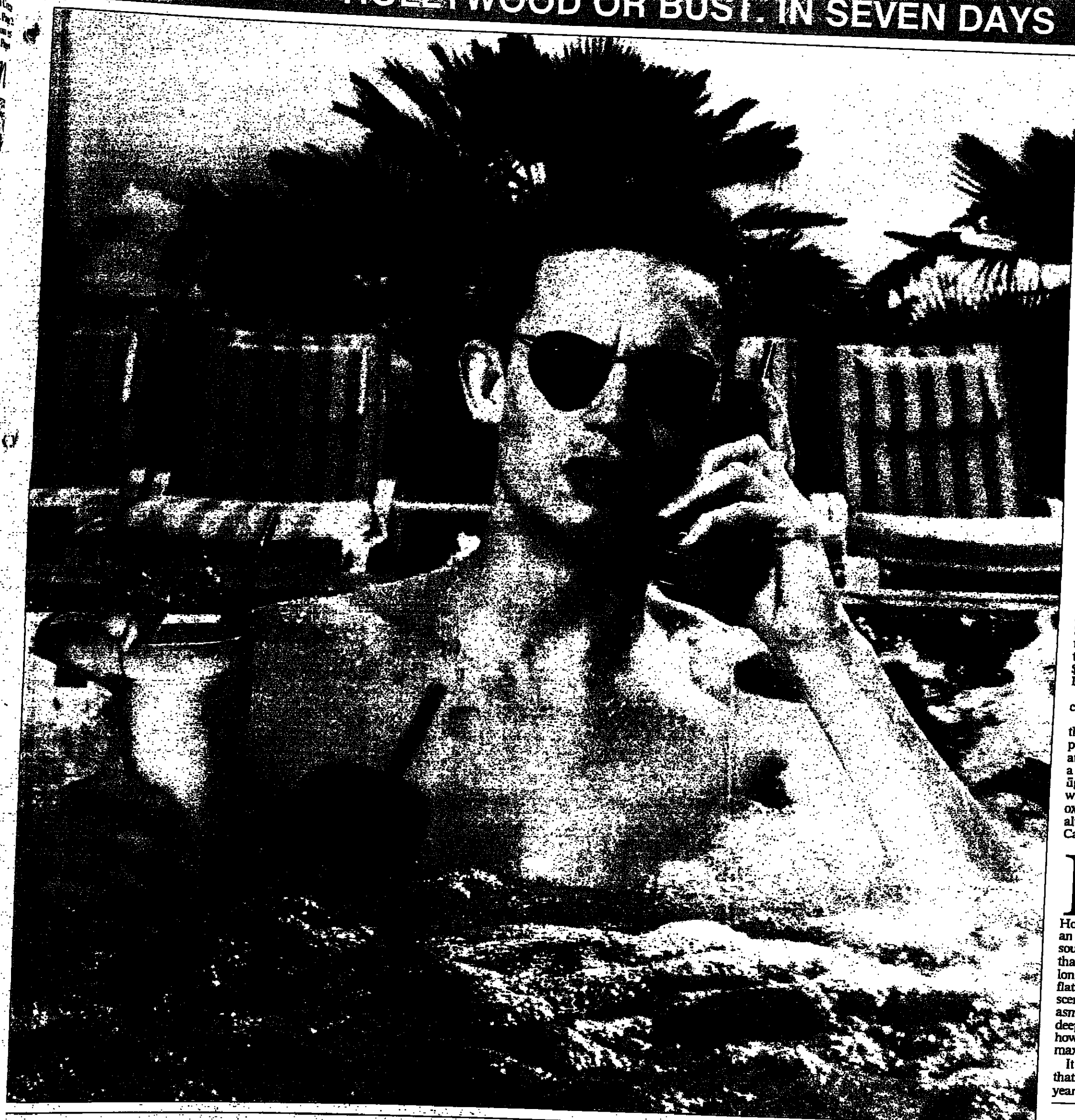
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WEEKEND

THE TIMES SATURDAY APRIL 6 1996

HOLLYWOOD OR BUST. IN SEVEN DAYS



by Giles Whittell

On a recent Thursday afternoon in Beverly Hills, Richard Rees scored a singular triumph. He was sitting among the golfing photos that clutter the corner office of super-agent Guy McElwaine, listening to glowing praise for a film script. His first.

It was, McElwaine said, an exceptional piece of writing: fresh, ingenious, atmospheric and with the potential to become "a very successful movie". Eventually Rees summoned the nerve to ask whether, if it were all these things, McElwaine would undertake to sell it.

"Categorically," was the reply. A more excitable sort might have peeled his clammy palms from the arms of his seat and punched the air in delight. But Rees, who is 31 and as unflappable as the Sphinx, acknowledged his screenwriting hole-in-one with little more than an inward smile and, later, a dip in the pool at the legendary Four Seasons Hotel (see left).

It is said that at any given moment more than 40,000 unfilmed scripts are circulating in Hollywood's internal mail systems and on the sun-drenched back seats of its sports cars. Of these perhaps 5 per cent are ever picked up by a producer. Of these fewer than one in ten get made into films and of these an even tinier proportion earn back their budgets.

Screenwriting can be a thankless trade and, since the dawn of rolling celluloid, its practitioners have sought ways to beat the odds. Apart from submitting to the inevitable decades of sweat and tears there is only one way of doing this: get yourself a decent agent, preferably the best in town.

By common consent, Guy McElwaine is among the best. It was he who discovered Sharon Stone and turned Joe Eszterhas from a rugged-looking *Rolling Stone* reporter into the only screenwriter in history to command \$1.5 million for a two-page idea for a film about Las Vegas strippers, which became *Showgirls*.

Here, then, is a guide to getting on his client list.

Step one: beat tough competition to win this newspaper's annual script-writing competition which, in its inaugural year last year, attracted more than 2,000 entries, judged by a panel of some of the most distinguished figures in British film. Then arm yourself with cast iron self-belief, the endurance of an ox, a light linen jacket suitable for the alternating sun and squalls of a Southern Californian spring, and head out west.

It seemed to work for Rees, winner of last year's *Times* scriptwriting competition, though none of it was easy. His breakthrough in the offices of International Creative Management, one of Hollywood's top three agencies, came after an exhausting week of baring his creative soul by day and schmoozing with the hipper-than-hip by night. It was a week of little sleep, long drinks and too many cigarettes; of flattery from some power-brokers, condescension from others and genuine enthusiasm from a few. It was an object lesson in the deeply subjective appeal of any script, however good, and in that oldest of showbiz maxims: it's not what you know, but who.

It all began with a gleamingly good idea that dropped into his head one night last year. Richard was at home in Cambridge

Continued on page 3, col 1

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Planning to see a show or a film, an exhibition or a concert? *The Times* critics select the best entertainment

GALLERIES

Richard Cork

GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE Unlike his ever-popular allies in the Impressionist movement, Caillebotte is an unfamiliar name. He is known, if at all, as a discerning early collector of paintings by Cézanne, Monet, Renoir and his other friends. Dying at the age of 45 in 1894, Caillebotte bequeathed the pictures to the French national museums, thereby laying the foundations of their Impressionist collections. But his exhibition at the Royal Academy proves that he was, above all, a serious and challenging painter in his own right. The best canvases date from the 1870s, when Caillebotte exhibited with the Impressionists and concentrated on urban scenes. Whether producing panoramic views of the Paris boulevards, or interiors looking out onto the streets below, he defined the energy and anonymity of modern metropolitan life.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS, Piccadilly, London W1 (0171-439 7439), until June 23. **SYMBOLS FOR SI** When the Festival of Britain came to an end in 1951, Churchill's incoming Conservative government destroyed most of the buildings erected on the South Bank site. But visitors' memories, combined with photographs and models, testify to the excitement generated by that extraordinary event. The austerity of postwar Britain was forgotten for a moment, and the future celebrated with new architecture, sculpture and painting. Now, at the Festival Hall, a special exhibition brings together much of the work that survives. The curator Robert Burrows has uncovered many lesser-known images, and he rightly gives generous space to the Skyline, the structure by Powell and Moya.

FESTIVAL HALL, South Bank, London SE1 (0171-921 0600), until Apr 21.

ROCK

David Sinclair

SOUND CITY 96 This year the spotlight falls on Leeds as its pubs, clubs, concert halls and colleges throw open their doors for the increasingly popular, week-long megafest. There will be a frenzy of activity including seminars, musicians' masterclasses, club nights and outdoor stages, and many of the events will be broadcast live on Radio 1. The big acts in town for the week include:

Town and Country: The Wildhearts (Apr 7); Manic Street Preachers (Apr 8); Sleeper/Sheen/60 Ft Dolls (Apr 9); Blue/tones/Cardigans/Northern Uproar (Apr 10); The Presidents of the United States of America/Ocean Colour Scene (Apr 11); **Metropolitan University Students' Union**: Terrorvision (Apr 8); Garbage (Apr 9); Ash (Apr 10); Dodgy/Dubstar (Apr 11); Orbital/Wedding Present/Bis (Apr 12). **Information** (0113-243 8885) and **Bookings** (0113-280 0100).

TASMIN ARCHER A modest handful of dates mark the low-key return to the spotlight of the *Sleeping Satellite* star, Tasmin Archer. And although her new album, *Bloom*, is unlikely to produce a hit single of similar magnitude, it stands as a carefully considered and impressively cool piece of work. Accompanied by a five-piece band, the singer from Bradford performs in a simple, direct style, but is capable of infusing her songs with deep shades of longing and regret. **Windsor Baths**, Bradford (01274 390405), Apr 11; **Manchester University** (0161-275 2930), Apr 12; **Royal Concert Hall**, Glasgow (0141-332



Collector and painter: the Impressionist Gustave Caillebotte's 1877 canvas *Canotiers (Oarsmen)* is among the artist's works at the Royal Academy (see Galleries)

6633), Apr 13; **Birmingham Town Hall** (0121-605 6666), Apr 15; **Bloomsbury Theatre**, London WC1 (0171-388 8822), Apr 16.

DANCE

John Percival

GRAND FRENCH BALLETS CANADIENS This company from Montreal has changed completely since earlier London seasons: new director, dancers and repertoire. They open at Birmingham Rep with *Quintessence* by Mark Morris, plus Jim Kylián's thrilling *Sinfonietta* and for the only time on this tour, Nacho Duato's *Rassemblement*. **Quintessence plus *The Moor's Paw* by José Limón, *Black Cake* by Hans van Manen, and *Double Time* by Itzik Galili. Then Sadler's Wells has two programmes by these choreographers plus a new name, Kevin O'Day, and the tour ends in Aberdeen and Glasgow. **Repertoire Theatre**, Birmingham (0121-236 4455), Apr 10, 11, 7.30pm; **Grand Theatre**, Blackpool (01253 28372), Apr 14; **Sadler's Wells Theatre**, London EC1 (0171-713 6000), Apr 16-20; **His Majesty's Theatre**, Aberdeen (01224 641122), Apr 23, 24; **King's Theatre**, Glasgow (0141-227 5511), Apr 25-27; all at 7.30pm.**

SOLITAIRE Kenneth MacMillan's playful ballet to Malcolm Arnold's music joins London City Ballet's repertoire. It will be given with Ashton's *Les Patineurs* and some popular showpieces in a gala programme at Buxton (Apr 10, 11), then at Blackpool (Apr 23), Northampton (Apr 30-May 2) and York (June 21, 22). Other dates have Matthew Hart's *Cinderella*. **Opera House**, Buxton (01298 72190), Apr 10-13, 7.30pm; **Churchill**

Theatre, Bromley (0181-4606 677), Apr 15-20; **Grand Theatre**, Blackpool (01253 28372), Apr 23-27; **Derngate**, Northampton (01604 24811), Apr 30-May 2; **Grand Theatre**, York (01904 67818).



London City Ballet's repertoire includes Ashton's *Les Patineurs*

June 18-22; also Eastbourne, Nottingham, Bath, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Sheffield and Leeds.

JAZZ

Clive Davis

PHARAOH SANDERS Afrocentrism may, at last, be losing ground on the American campus, but its mystical imagery lives on in the albums of the saxophonist Pharaoh Sanders. In his early period as a Coltrane acolyte in the 1960s, his solos reached stratospheric levels of intensity and volume; recently a mellower strain has entered his playing, and he has become something of a ballad specialist. His album, *Message from Home*, finds him hammering home his message in the chant "Our Roots (Began in Africa)".

The Rhythmic, Chapel Market, London N1 (0171-715 8859), Fri 12 to Sun 21, (not Mon 15), 9pm.

CHELLENHAM JAZZ FESTIVAL An exceptionally varied programme. Andy Sheppard carries the flag on the opening evening, performing with both his group, Small Co-Motion and the Bergen Big Band. The following day sees sessions by ECM guitarist Ralph Towner, Stephane Grappelli and Bobby Wellins. The closing day belongs to George Farrow, Martin Taylor and the funky Ray Brown Trio, a group which always goes down well with festival audiences. **Town Hall/Everyman Theatre**, Cheltenham, Bookings on (01242 227979), Fri 12 to Sun 14.

MUSEUMS

John Russell Taylor

THE DIRECTOR'S EYE The obvious way of celebrating the centenary of the cinema is by screening films. But there is ample scope for more static exhibitions too, and the Oxford Museum of Modern Art has, in association with the British Film Institute, come up with one of the more interesting notions. Film-makers such as Eisenstein, Fellini and Hitchcock were also gifted draughtsmen, and along with their graphic works are designs by Alfred Junge for *Black Narcissus*, Paul Leni for *Waxworks* and Christopher Hobbs for *Caravaggio*. **Museum of Modern Art**, 30 Pembroke Street, Oxford (01865 722733), Tue-Sat, 10am-6pm (Thurs to 9pm); Sun, 2-6pm, until Apr 14.

LONDON ON FILM The Museum of London, of course, does feature regular film screenings, most of them relating to the various

ways film-makers have worked in or around and used London. For the centenary celebrations it has added an exhibition which pursues the matter in greater and more specific detail. Also, it is illuminat-



Julie Andrews flies over London in a scene from *Mary Poppins*

ing to observe how the London scene is observed as a background and films with not the least documentary intention become valuable sources of architectural or social history. **Museum of London**, London Wall, London EC2 (0171-600 0807), Tue-Sat, 10am-5.00pm; Sun, noon-5.00pm, until October 27.

OPERA

Rodney Milnes

NABUCCO When first seen in Cardiff, Tim Albery's production, mounted jointly for the Welsh National and Royal Operas, proved just as controversial as the Richard Jones *Ring*, and since was added when Sir Edward Downes, announced to conduct at Covent Garden, withdrew and said why.

Albery certainly responds to the young Verdi's equivocal standpoint in his *Risorgimento* operas. Next week's cast boasts Alexandru Agache, and the replacement conductor is Wladimir Jurowski. **Royal Opera House**, Bow St, London WC2 (0171-304 4000), Tue 9, Fri 12, 7.30pm.

THE MASK OF ORPHEUS Britwistle's huge opera was an equally huge success when premiered at English National Opera in 1986, but was too expensive to revive. This one-night stand to launch the South Bank's "Secret Theatres" Britwistle festival is its first airing for ten years. The cast includes Jon Garrison, Jean Rigby and Alan Ogie, the producer is Stephen Langridge, and the designer Alison Chitty. Andrew Davis conducts the BBC Symphony Orchestra. **Unmissable**. **Festival Hall**, South Bank, London SE1 (0171-960 4242), Fri 12, 7pm.

THEATRE

Benedict Nightingale

CLOCKS AND WHISTLES Dominic Dromgoole's vaudeville production as Bush director brings us yet another striking play by yet another unknown young author. On the evidence of this sophisticated comedy, Samuel Adamson's strengths include the ability to evoke a louche, bohemian London and a knack for creating lively characters, notably an uptight young publisher earnestly flummoxed when his male lover has a fling with the Sloanish actress who likes to think she is his best friend. **Bush**, Shepherd's Bush, London W11 (0181-743 3388), Mon-Sat, 8pm.

LADY INTO FOX David Garratt's short story about the respect-

able wife who inexplicably transmutes into a furry Lady Chatterley with four feet and a tail has been enterprisingly turned into a sub-Aesopian oratorio by Neil Barden and Nicolas Bloomfield. The music may clunk and squiggle a bit too much for conventional tastes, but it adds to the oddness and originality of an evening whose code is not hard to break. The setting may be Victorian, but the subject is one that crosses the decades, men's sadly sporadic ability to cope with women's sexuality. **Lyric Studio**, King Street, Hammersmith, London W6 (0181-741 8701), tonight and Tue 9-Sat 13, 8pm; matinees: Sat, 4.30pm.

FILMS

Geoff Brown

NORTH BY NORTHWEST (PG) Hitchcock's celebrated thriller from 1959, a masterful blend of suspense and drollery, returns to the cinemas in a gleaming new print. If the passing years reveal some technical limitations, time has wrought little damage on the delightful predicament faced by Cary Grant. A debonair advertising executive, he is mistaken for a government agent, and spends the rest of the film tangling with courtly villain James Mason, an icy blonde (Eva Marie Saint) and the carved heads of Mount Rushmore. Ernest Lehman's script is crisp and witty; Bernard Herrmann's turbulent music is another delight. **Lumiere** (0171-836 0691).

SMALL FACES (18) After tastering Hollywood, the director Gillies MacKinnon returns to his native Glasgow for this richly rewarding account of teenage life in the late 1960s, written with his brother Billy. Brothers dominate the plot too. MacKinnon's customary hard-driven visual style keeps strict realism at bay; but there is plenty of emotional truth in the performances by young Scottish talents Iain Robertson, Joe McFadden and Kevin McKidd. **MGMs**, Chelsea (0171-352 5096), **Haymarket** (0171-839 1527), **Tottenham Court Road** (0171-636 0148), **Odeon Swiss Cottage** (01426 914058), **Ritz** (0171-737 2121), **Screen on Baker Street** (0171-935 2772); **Warner** (0171-437 4343).

CLASSICAL

Richard Morrison

BIRTWISTLE IN BULK Love it or loathe it, the music of Sir Harrison Birtwistle can hardly be avoided on the South Bank this month. A massive celebration of the composer begins on Friday with a semi-staged performance of *The Mask of Orpheus*; later it includes a big new piece of music theatre, *Pulse Shadows*, based on the poems of Paul Celan. There is also a chance to hear another performance of *Panic* — the piece which caused a stir when it was broadcast at the Last Night of the Proms. The festival will not convert those who think of Birtwistle's music as unintelligible dissonance on a grand scale — for the reason that they will not attend. But more open-minded listeners will relish the chance to hear such a diverse survey of an avant-garde giant. **South Bank**, London SE1 (0171-960 4242), Fri 12, 7pm, until May 4.

YOUTH ON SHOW After its accompanying role at last week-end's BBC Young Musician of the Year competition, the National Youth Orchestra is showcased in its own right this week. To hear these young players powering through Bruckner's epic Eighth Symphony should be memorable. **Barbican**, Silk Street, London EC2 (0171-638 8891), Thurs 11, 7.30pm.

WEST END THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London
House full, returns only. Some seats available. Seats at all prices

858 (7755) Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mat Sat, 2.30pm. Two part Apr 8 & 9.
AN IDEAL HUSBAND Triumphs return for Peter Hall's production of Wilde's drama of political sleaze and scandal. The star cast includes Martin Sharr, Anna Carter and Pamina Dowling. **Palmerston** until Apr 20.
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THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

Michael Sibery and John Lumsden at the centre of Gales Edward's peculiar but award-winning production from last year's Stratford.

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NEW RELEASES

NADIA: Adventures of Dracula's offspring in New York. Any but effective horror film from US independent.

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CINEMA GUIDE

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INSIDE STORY

3

'He was walking into the jaws of a seriously cut-throat industry'



Continued from page 1
reading *A Distant Mirror*. Barbara Tuchman's blood-soaked portrait of fourteenth-century Europe. A journalists' agent by profession, he had barely done any writing himself in four years, though as a film buff he had always told himself and others that one day he would write a screenplay. A particular paragraph of Tuchman's roused in him the sleeping cinema enthusiast. It concerned Sir Richard Hawkwood, a fearsome British mercenary who "fought for Pisa against Florence and vice versa" and inspired the proverb "An Italianised Englishman is a devil incarnate".

Six hundred years later Hawkwood became Richard Rees's hero. "I've always loved history," he said (despite a degree in business studies) from behind an enormous bowl of mussels at the old-fashioned but fashionable Le Dome on Sunset Boulevard. "It's the vividness of the characters you come across. You think, 'bloody hell, these are guys that lived and breathed'."

In a single afternoon in Cambridge University li-

brary, Hawkwood was woven into a two-page outline for a tortuous tale of slaughter, passion and revenge. Twenty sample pages of dialogue were written and polished over the next two weeks and dispatched under the name Steven Stransky ("I thought my own name sounded a bit bland") mere hours before the competition deadline.

When told he'd won, Rees thought at first his leg was being pulled. Not so. Norma Heyman, one of the judges, said: *The Mercenary's Tale* stood out for the quality of its writing and a truly frightening portrayal of vengeance.

More praise followed from the other judges. Dates were chosen for the first prize of a week of meetings in Hollywood in which Rees would pitch the screenplay to industry players in a position to get it made. Finally, displaying an enviable lack of writer's block, he polished off the rest of the screenplay and re-named it *The Privateer*.

Flying into Los Angeles can be intimidating at the best of times. Walking as an unknown with a single bright idea into the jaws of the world's most cut-throat service industry takes nerves of steel. Rees deserved a stroke of luck, and he duly got one. A friend from his school days, now a producer in LA, had learned of *The Privateer* from the columns of *The Times* and solicited a copy of the script.

"I couldn't believe this was his first draft," said Russell Fisher, a development executive at the independent production company Constantine Films, who spends most of his time seeking out literary properties to adapt for film. "It was such refreshing stuff. The structure was expertly laid-down and the characters so vivid you could practically feel the grime on their tunics. In six years I've read thousands of scripts and liked only three. This was one of them."

Later, McElwaine said that he was especially taken with the villain of the piece, a demonic priest-slaying Turk called Issouf Rise. "Great heavy," said the agent. "Good heavies are very hard to create, but every successful movie going back to Dr No

has a great antagonist." Fisher met Rees at LA's international airport and took him to the Chateau Marmont Hotel on Sunset Boulevard. From a sixth-floor suite in this neo-gothic shrine to hedonism, he enjoyed panoramic views of the Hollywood Hills to the north and of LA's urban sprawl to the south. The Chateau Marmont is where John Belushi died of an overdose in 1982. More recently it was taken over for an experimental art show whose most striking exhibit consisted of half a dozen topless women handing out brochures around the pool. Rees chose subtle stimulation. He fought off jet lag at the achingly trendy Le Colonial, a new Vietnamese restaurant favoured by Kim Basinger and David Hockney. The following lunchtime he and Fisher made the first of several trips to Le Dome.

Power lunching is the stuff of cliché, but also of good business. Fisher wanted to see *The Privateer* not simply bought but turned into a film. To this end he had shown it to colleagues, recommended it through them to ICM and let it be known where the writer would be lunching. On cue, the two-man team of John Irvin (director of *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* and *Hammerhead*) and David Giler (producer of the *Alien* films)

walked in, introduced themselves and sat down at the next table. The talk was general but the connection had been made. Irvin and Giler also happened to be ICM clients, which would help should the agency decide to "package" *The Privateer* for studio consumption. "I didn't realise until afterwards that it had all been planned," Rees said. It certainly paid off. Phone calls throughout that afternoon led to McElwaine's request for a meeting later in the week.

Flushed with beginner's luck, Rees accepted Fisher's invitation to take part in the Hollywood ritual known as Monday Night At Morton's: dinner in Beverly Hills with a crowd of real and aspiring moguls who turn up not so much for the seared tuna as to be seen in the only restaurant that Peter Morton dignifies with his name. (His others are the Hard Rock Cafés.) Day one had passed off auspiciously. Days two and three were less encouraging. Rees splashed gamely through pouring rain to meetings with Fine Line Features, Columbia Pictures, and Rob Levine at TriStar only to hear that his contacts hadn't read his script. It was the same story at the Creative Artists' Agency, ICM's biggest rival, where the worker bees of the entertain-

ment business buzz to and fro across a giant marble lobby wearing headsets with "head up" microphones, presumably to show the rest of us that mere telephones are for wimps.

Undeterred, Rees practised the terrifying art of pitching a screenplay from cold. Launching without preamble into a description of a complex medieval melodrama, he quickly learned which soundbites grabbed his listeners' attention. Calling *The Privateer* "an English Western" seemed to work with Ken Hardy, an agent at CAA. "I really think I got him," Rees said afterwards, pacing up and down Santa Monica Boulevard. "You can tell by the eyes."

Even so, CAA chose to sit on the fence. A vice-president of production at Fine Line Features was non-committal. And Lisa Henson, installed in the Art Deco splendour of Culver City's Irving Thalberg Building as president of Columbia Pictures, said the script was not for her since it would need a "medium-to-high budget" of up to \$60 million. (The studio's last period drama, *First Knight*, flopped despite performances by Sean Connery and Richard Gere.) Henson's assistant added deflatingly that the script was "a great writing sample", undertaken "for the experience". By now Rees had higher hopes. "I can only schmooze so

long, then I want to get some decisions made," he said, refuelling on espresso and Marlboro Lights back at Le Dome, which had become base camp for his assault on Mount Hollywood.

He did not have to wait long. Within 48 hours he was on McElwaine's elite client list, rescheduling his return to London to squeeze in extra meetings with Irvin and Giler. By the following Monday they had committed themselves to *The Privateer* and furnished Rees with suggestions for a second draft. By Tuesday McElwaine had stipulated an Executive Producer credit for

his new client should the film be made. There was even heady talk of turning Sir Richard Hawkwood into a serial hero à la Batman.

Talk is cheap, especially in Hollywood. *The Privateer*, does not yet have the massive financing required nowadays for even a medium-budget film, but no one can accuse its creator of cooling his heels during his week in the networking capital of the world. He pitched his script nine times, dined in most of Hollywood's top restaurants, and found himself a world-class agent and two established collaborators. He even managed to lose \$300 on blackjack in Las Vegas. When I caught up with him for the last time, in the airport departure lounge, he was... fast asleep.

Royal day for 'feet washing'

Ruth Gledhill on the Maundy Thursday service at Norwich



THE compelling combination of despair and hope, which is the predominant feature of Holy Week in the run up to Good Friday and Easter Day, is nowhere more apparent than at the annual office for Royal Maundy, at which the Queen distributes Maundy coins to pensioners, selected because of their service to the church and community. This year the service was held at Norwich cathedral. "Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness and forgive me all my sin. For I acknowledge my faults," the choir sang as the Queen distributed the small red and white purses containing the coins to 70 men and women on the southside of the cathedral. The number of recipients of the silver pence varies each year according to the age of the sovereign.

Those of us on the north side caught a glimpse of the Queen's red coat and hat, and the white linen of the Lord High Almoner, the Rt Rev John Taylor, who recently retired as Bishop of St Albans.

Norwich cathedral is this year celebrating the 900th anniversary of the laying of its foundation stone, and the Queen's Maundy Thursday visit, her first to the city for ten years, was the highlight of the festivity.

The Royal Maundy is a shortened survival of the church's ancient ceremony of *pedilavium*, or foot washing, a symbolic re-enactment of the Last Supper, at which Christ washed the feet of His disciples. The service takes its name from the Latin *Mandatum*, or commandment, and opens with the Lord High Almoner reading the relevant passage from St John's Gospel: "Jesus said: I give you a new commandment: love one another; as I have loved you, so you are to love one another." Although the washing of feet at the Royal Maundy was discontinued in 1730, Bishop Taylor and his assistants were "girded" with linen towels in remembrance of this, some of the towels dating from 1883, and they carried the traditional nosegays of sweet herbs.

The Duke of Edinburgh read the first lesson from St John's Gospel, with references to love and betrayal. The second lesson — St Matthew's parable of the last judgment — was read by Canon Michael Perham, the Vice Dean.

● *Norwich Cathedral, Norfolk NR1 4EG (01603 219483).*

● *At a Service Near You, a collection Ruth Gledhill's 'At Your Service' columns in The Times, is now on sale (Hodder & Stoughton £7.99).*

AT YOUR SERVICE

A five-star guide

DEAN: The Very Rev Stephen Platt
ARCHITECTURE: Romanesque in style, begun 900 years ago and breathtakingly beautiful with its 315ft spire and vaulted nave. ★★★★★
MUSIC: From our seats near the west door we could make out the ghostly voices of the cathedral choir and the Chapel Royal choir — the latter's forebears sang at Agincourt. ★★★★★
LITURGY: Sometimes mysterious texts and prayers of charity, love and sin, with hymns and anthems. ★★★★★
AFTER SERVICE CARE: Private reception for the recipients of the Maundy gifts.
SPIRITUAL HIGH: One to inspire sombre reflection ★★

Cover photograph of Richard Rees by EVAN HURD
Graphic on this page by LAURA SYLVESTER

THE TIMES SCREENWRITING COMPETITION 1996

Your chance to become a scriptwriter

The Times Screenwriting Competition 1996 aims to find Britain's top filmwriting talent and offers a first prize of an all-expenses-paid trip to Hollywood to pitch a script before key executives at major studios. To enter collect four of the six tokens which have been published, a bonus token is printed below. Your entry should be in English, typed and double-spaced on A4 paper and in the following form: a) a 100-word précis which sells your film script and includes the title b) a treatment of not more than 750 words incorporating the story, characters, structure and genre, together with your name, address, and daytime telephone number at the top of the first sheet, and c) three consecutive sample scenes submitted on a minimum of two A4 pages.

Send your entry to: The Times Screenwriting Competition 1996, PO Box 510, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 8QS. Closing date May 9, 1996. Full terms and conditions appeared on Thursday March 28, 1996.



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GARDEN ANSWERS

STEPHEN ANDERTON
replies to readers' letters

Q We are trying to create a garden in half an acre of fertile soil surrounding our cottage in Normandy. Every holiday we do a bit of clearing and planting, but two months later the garden has returned to wilderness, with grass 4ft high. Should we spray, burn, or rotovate? — A.L.W. Ecclestone, Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

A How do you calm down growth on fertile soil in balmy Normandy? If this were rocky Spain, or Kerry, with the soil painted on as thin as margarine on a British Rail sandwich, things would be different. But it's not. Normandy is like England but warmer, and you must maintain the garden as you would here: often. I would neither spray, burn nor rotovate. By all means have some close gardening around the cottage, but for the greater part I would look to wild gardening, with as little cultivation as possible. Use trees, including fruit, vigorous shrubs, and naturalised perennials. Make the most of local wild flowers. Mow just where you need to and no more. Perhaps someone could be hired to run a mower over the main paths once a month? When you plant, do all you can to reduce the competition from weeds during establishment. Use commercial mulch mats, or upside-down turf around young trees and shrubs.

Q Deer are consuming my garden, especially the roses and dianthus. Neighbours tell me that nothing less than a 15ft fence will deter them. Now that growth is starting I am experimenting with cat's head scarecrows. Do you know of a deterrent? — H. MacColl, Lyme Regis, Dorset.

A Open-plan gardens suffer the worst from deer. Total fencing is outrageously expensive and ugly, although 15ft is not necessary, even for the larger species of deer. If you can establish boundary hedges of crude, sacrificial vegetation, using smaller fences, and narrow down entry to strategic points, deterrents

become a possibility. If you can persuade the deer to turn away at those points, you are winning. Cat's head scarecrows are new to me. I'd like to hear more about them.

Q My flat has a north-facing flat roof outside its windows. On it are several aluminium, trough-shaped cans in which I would like to grow plants. Will any shrub tolerate growing in them, and can I fill them with garden soil? — Mrs E.M. Roberts, Caernarfon, Gwynedd.

A Whatever you grow, the cans must be properly drained. Use a layer of coarse gravel and/or bricks to cover the holes. You could use garden soil but a coarse compost or shredded bark would be better. Those cans are going to be bitterly cold in winter, and won't get much sun in summer, so the choice of plants is not great. In summer you could bed them out, using shade tolerant plants such as busy lizzies. But shrubs would have to have a cation constitution to survive, and their roots would intermingle, making periodic re-potting difficult. Aim for permanent evergreen planting in some cans and colour from bedding in the others. Then you would at least have something to look at in winter. Try blocks of box, or sweet-scented *Sarcococca humilis*, like little runs of hedge. They could be moved against a wall for protection in winter, and set out as a variable "parterre" in summer. Tall shrubs run the risk of blowing over, so use plants which can be cut down each spring to give colourful winter twigs, like *Cornus alba* 'Elegantissima' (variegated white in summer) and some of the blue or orange-stemmed willows.

Q Readers wishing to have their gardening problems answered should write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington St, London E1 9XN. We regret that few personal answers can be given and that it may not be possible to deal with every request. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. The Times also regrets that enclosures accompanying letters cannot be returned.

Mad to use bonemeal and blood?

THE furor over BSE raises the question of whether or not we should use blood and bonemeal in gardens. It seems that the temperatures used to sterilise bonemeal may not be high enough to kill the disease and that it may linger in the soil. I shall continue to use bonemeal, with gloves, and be sure (as ever) not to breathe in the dust. For those who will not take the risk, there are alternative artificial fertilisers, the cheapest being Growmore for balanced, slow release, and sulphate and ammonia for high nitrogen.



Outstanding yew hedges and topiary at Hole Park, Rolvenden, near Cranbrook, Kent, help to provide a striking setting for mixed borders and rose and sunken gardens

Parks that spring off the page

Easter weekend is the time many people start their garden-planting year so, as a start, here is a selection of invaluable guidebooks.

The 1996 edition of *The Good Gardens Guide* (Verminion, £13.99) is the last of seven edited by Graham Rose, who died last year, and Peter King. The book includes more than 1,000 British gardens and a limited selection from France, Holland and Belgium. Readers can decide whether they agree with the editors' awards of one star or, in 113 cases, two stars, and enjoy potted biographies of history's great gardeners.

Illustrations and overall presentation are the fortes of *The Gardener's Guide to Britain* (Pavilion, £12.99) by Patrick Taylor, now in his fifth year. Another feature is the number of specialist nurseries, listed with the gardens, making a total of about 450 venues. There are not as many statistics as in *The Good Gardens Guide*, but the text (produced by GGG inspectors) is more personal.

The two "yellow books", *Gardens of England and Wales*, listing 3,500 gardens (National Gardens Scheme, £3.50) and *Gardens of Scotland*, with more than 300 gardens (Scotland's Garden Scheme, £2.50), are the most comprehensive. They contain



Garden fountain statuary at Ascott, Buckinghamshire (left), and one of the linked ponds at Forde Abbey, Somerset

the greatest number of potential discoveries — small gardens that open once or twice a year and are little known outside their immediate area.

It was in 1927 that the first gardens opened under the auspices of the National Gardens Scheme (1931 in Scotland), when gardens charged one shilling (5p) entrance. There is a distinguished group of 50 gardens (44 in England and Wales, six in Scotland) that opened in the inaugural year and are operating more than 60 years later. Here are four that are open this weekend.

□ Hole Park, Rolvenden, near Cranbrook, Kent (01580 241251).

On B2086 between Cranbrook and Rolvenden. Open, 2-6pm, April 7, 14, 24, 25; May 5, 15, 19, 26; June 5; Oct 13, 20, £2.50, children under 12, 50p.

Hole Park is a fine example of an early 20th-century garden revitalised in recent decades. The formal framework of dividing walls, terraces and lawns, decorated with ornaments and, in particular, out-

standing yew hedges and topiary, has been carefully preserved. The established features provide the setting for rejuvenated planting. But the garden's character has been greatly expanded by the woodland garden added by its owner, David Barham. Coming to life at this time of year, the wooded dell, with water running through, is typical of the Wealden countryside, and the addition of plants to complement native bluebells and other wild flowers has been done sensitively. Daffodils are followed by a display of rhododendrons and azaleas. This early in the season, the garden's setting in well-preserved parkland and its views out to the Weald are particularly enjoyable.

□ The Hirsell, Coldstream, Berwickshire (01890 882834).

Just west of Coldstream on A697. Open daily all year 10am-4.30pm. £2 parking charge only.

Much of this garden's character and quality is thanks to the attention of Lord Home of the Hirsell, whose lifelong home it was until his death last year. The gardens surround the centuries-old family house, encompassing a large lake and extending along the banks of the Leet Water, which flows into the Tweed a mile away in Coldstream. Spring into summer sees a succession of

snowdrops and aconites, a breathtaking quantity of daffodils, and the rhododendrons and azaleas that Lord Home especially liked and planted in Dundock Wood. But, in addition to the gardening interest, it is somewhere to appreciate a rare natural environment, with magnificent trees, secluded walks and, at this time of year, an absorbing variety of nesting birds.

□ Ascott, Wing, near Leighton Buzzard, Buckinghamshire (01296 688242).

South of A410, half a mile east of Wing. Open April 2-May 5 and Sept 3-29. Tues-Sun: May 10-Aug 30, Wed and last Sun in month. All 2-6pm (last entry 5pm). £3, children £1.50, under-fives free.

The Rothschild family may not have had a monopoly on grand Victorian gardening, but they produced some of the most spectacular examples, among which Ascott survives in sparkling condition, thanks to the National Trust, which took over the garden in the

1950s. After Leopold de Rothschild acquired the property during the 1870s he employed the period's smartest firm of nurserymen and garden contractors, James Veitch and Sons of Chelsea.

Throughout the 39 acres there is a sense of grandeur: sweeping terraces and lawns with outstanding cedars and other evergreen trees; long, double herbaceous borders; rose gardens and a Dutch garden bedded out with annuals that all come to a peak later in the year. At this time there is a spectacular display of spring bulbs and, although the garden's colour is still restrained, this is a time to appreciate the golden and green yew topiary, including a topiary sundial, as well as the memorable views out from the garden across the Vale of Aylesbury. Two grandiose fountain groups, one bronze the other marble, by the American Ralph Waldo Story, complete the atmosphere of luxuriant quality.

□ Forde Abbey, Chard, Somerset (01460 220231).

Off A30, four miles southwest of Chard. Open 10am-4.30pm all year. £3.25, children under 15 free.

Created around the ancient buildings of the Cistercian abbey, with abundant water in ponds linked by streams, Forde Abbey is an established garden that can be enjoyed at any time of the year, with or without horticultural decoration.

Much of this quality comes later in the year, through borders and climbers, vegetables in the immaculate walled kitchen garden behind the abbey, and the collection of Asiatic primulas that are a forte in the lakeside bog garden. But there is plenty to enjoy now, such as early flowering magnolias among the impressive collection in the shrubbery, the revitalised rock garden, and the many rare trees in the arboretum that has steadily expanded since its first plantings in 1947.

GEORGE PLUMPTRE

WEEKEND TIPS

- Be prepared to spray aphids on greenhouse plants as the weather warms up.
- Clip summer-flowering heathers as the new shoots begin to grow.
- Plant gladioli at a depth of 6in and set them on sand in heavy soils.
- Protect wall blossom and early flowering shrubs against night frosts, with netting or fleece.

The plot to get more taste

EASTER is traditionally the start of a period of intensive activity in the vegetable garden and allotment. After preparing the ground, now is the time to attend to:

ASPARAGUS: plant new beds. Spread out the roots 5in deep in a 1ft-wide trench. The soil must be rich in well-rotted manure or compost, well drained and in a sunny, sheltered spot. Be patient — asparagus must be kept absolutely weed-free, and it takes two years for a decent crop to develop. Connover's Colossal is the best.

POTATOES: plant early varieties. Spuds are ideal for clearing new ground — the process of earthing up and their dense canopy help to break down the soil and control weeds. Duke of York and Epicure offer the finest flavour.

SHALLOTS AND ONIONS: place the sets 6in apart in rich, well-drained soil. Firm the surface of the ground before you press them in so that just the tips are left showing. Shallots are easy to grow; Dutch yellow is a good, basic variety. Try to find heat-treated onions — they

will not bolt in dry weather. Stuttgarter Giant and Ailsa Craig are old reliables, but from Suttons, for the sake of variety.

● Spring is late and much of the ground is still cold and wet. But warmer weather can't be far away so, in coming weeks:

SOW OUTDOORS: summer carrots (Amsterdam Forcing is quickest to mature); parsley; early dwarf peas (Kelvedon Wonder is difficult to beat); leeks (Musselburgh); broad beans (Masterpiece Longpod); summer cabbage (Golden Acre, for fast maturing, Winnigstad, ready for cutting in late summer).

SOW IN POTS under glass or on a warm windowsill: courgette (Golden Zucchini for creamy flesh and good flavour); ridge cucumber (Burpee Hybrid).

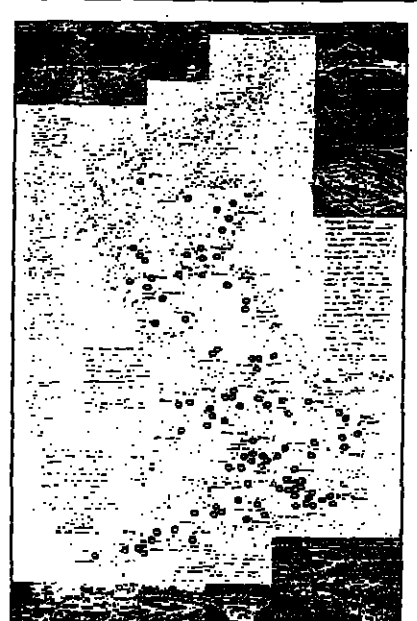
STRAWBERRIES: plant now (always buy from a first-class grower to avoid diseased plants).

DAVID BLUNDELL

Free

Phone for a garden map

Here's a free guide to garden-planting. A beautifully artworked map showing some of the finest gardens in Britain is being offered by the British Tourist Authority to any Times reader who telephones its office on 01271 326988.



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NOTHING RUNS LIKE A DEERE



سازمان اطلاعات

page

هَذَا مِنْ الْأَوَّلِ

COLLECTING

Myths and magic of a painted egg

If you shell out the equivalent of two years' rent on a porcelain egg — that's the start of an obsession, says Jenny McClean

I like the idea that someone sat down and made this out of an ordinary lump of wax and then covered it in bugle beads. It's a labour of love," Percy Savage, a fashion PR and historian, was reminiscing about one of the 400 decorated eggs he has collected on his travels over the past 40 years. This particular egg, like all the best models, is Russian. On it, tiny glass beads form the letters "XB", the Cyrillic abbreviation for "Christ is Risen".

Eggs and Easter go together like children and chocolate. In the Eastern Orthodox Church eggs are painted red, the colour of blood and birth. In Austria they are green to symbolise nature's renewal.

Goddesses of early mythology were sometimes depicted hatching from eggs (perhaps, in sun-worshipping societies, because of the resemblance of the yolk to the sun). In ancient Egypt eggs were hung in temples to induce fertility, while in ancient Rome, expectant mothers carried eggs to ward off evil.

The tradition of decorating eggs and giving them as presents began in China in the 8th century BC. The story goes that, because all fires had to be extinguished in the run-up to the spring festival, an inventive chieftain disguised some pre-boiled eggs as edible presents.

Mr Savage also gives eggs as gifts. But of the non-edible variety. "I want to give a friend something special I sometimes choose an egg from my collection. I've found this emblem of fertility in every corner of the world — Russia, America, Japan. I see it as a unifying symbol: artisans of the world unite."

There are, naturally, favourites that he is unlikely to part with, such as pre-Russian Revolution poker-work and painted wooden eggs.



Decorated cardboard sun egg

"When I was a child my mother tried to teach me pokerwork, without success," he says. "I'm full of admiration that someone went to all the trouble of making these shapes so that they would open, then decorating and painting them."

Although these eggs were bought cheaply in a flea market, they are rarer than the more expensive porcelain models, Mr Savage says.

His discovery of the joy of eggs began soon after he arrived in Britain from Australia as an art student, with only a box of paints and a parrot in a cage ("which Customs wouldn't let in"). He hated London, food rationing, and the Slade School of Art, so he moved to Paris, where he spent 27 years working with the fashion houses.

"We had a client at Lanvin, a Russian emigrée, who collected small Fabergé eggs, which she wore as charms. I thought then that eggs



Percy Savage with some of his 400 eggs, made in a variety of materials. Individual eggs in the collection cost from a few pence to £600

were a good thing to collect because you could pack them up and travel with them, as she had done."

The Russian took the young Percy to the antique shop next door, where he bought his first egg: Russian, duck-egg blue porcelain painted with flowers and now about 150 years old. He paid £250 for it, which, at the time (the 1950s), was the equivalent of two years' rent. "It was a lot less expensive than some of them: I just wanted an egg of my own" is his justification for this extravagance.

The most he has ever paid for an egg is £600, in the mid-1960s. The least, a few pence, for examples such as a kirsch Fabergé-copy perfume container, a home-made Snoopy, a "Silly Putty" holder, or the many others he has bought just because they amused him.

He gets some eggs for nothing, as is the way when friends know you are a collector. Occasionally he just asks for one, as he did in a Turkish

WHERE TO SEE AND BUY EGGS

For £250 to £3,500 you can get a limited edition egg designed by Theo Fabergé (who claims to be Carl's Fabergé's only surviving grandson) at the St Petersburg Collection, 42 Burlington Arcade, Piccadilly: London W1V 9AE (0171-495 2883, or the House of Burlington, 1a Eastgate Row, Chester CH1 1LQ (01244 342034).

Hand-decorated eggs from a few pounds upwards are made by the 2,000 members of the Egg Crafters' Guild of Great Britain. They can turn pigeon eggs into pill boxes and ostrich eggs into clocks. Goose eggs are favourite, being large, strong and plentiful. Details from Joana Cuts, The Studio, 7 Hyton Terrace, North Shields, Tyne & Wear NE29 0EE (0191-238 3648).

The Clowns Gallery, Hackney, east London, has more than 70 porcelain eggs painted with the "slap" or face of British clowns over the past 50 years. The eggs serve as unofficial patents of individual clowns' make-up. The Clowns Gallery, 1 Hillman Street, London E8 (0171-723 3877); open on the first Friday of each month, 11am-4pm and 7.30-10pm, or by appointment. Free.

church when he wanted one of the pottery eggs suspended from chandeliers. They were happy to oblige, he says.

A plain wooden egg with scratch marks around the middle turned out to be a clothes drier's last.

Another, which looked like wood, was a carved nut which unscrewed in the middle to hold who-knows-what — pills, snuff, pins, sweets?

The fun of eggs, as Fabergé knew, is the secret within. (Mr Savage's Fabergé collection consisted of four

small eggs, which he has since sold.)

He cannot remember how much he paid for the gruesome Perspex egg with the glass eye inside, or the 1920s wooden egg from Germany painted as a flapper's face.

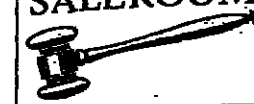
You can find eggs anywhere — from auction rooms to car-boot sales, he says. The Paris flea market was a fertile source and Portobello Road in west London is "not bad".

He wonders why there are so few other collectors: "Perhaps it's because eggs don't look too good all together. I like to display mine individually or in small groups in front of books or in a window."

Mr Savage regards his collection as an investment and is happy to sell "an egg or two", for instance, to buy air tickets to visit his daughter in Australia.

"Carl Fabergé said: 'Expensive things interest me little if the value is merely in so many diamonds or pearls.' My sentiments exactly," Mr Savage says.

SALEROOM



AMONG items at the Poteries Antique Centre auction in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, at noon today are about 100 Beatrix Potter figures made by the Beswick company. Mrs Flopsy Bunny, Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny are estimated at £50 to £70. The Royal Doulton section has 120 figures from the Bunnikin range, including Clown, at £220 to £250.

THE weekend is awash with antique fairs. About 300 dealers will be at Donington Park Exhibition Centre today and tomorrow, while a smaller group will offer pre-1950 items at Lamport Hall, Northamptonshire, tomorrow and Monday. London's biggest event is at the Westley Exhibition Centre on Monday.

HIGHLIGHTS of the L.S. Lowry exhibition at the Richard Green Gallery, Bond Street, London, on Wednesday include *Going to Work*, showing his famous matchstick figures, and *Fishing Smacks* featuring the boats at Lytham, Lancashire, where the artist spent childhood holidays. Prices from £16,000.

THE literary archive of author, painter, illustrator and collector Lady Dorothy Nevill (1826-1913) could raise more than £4,000 at Christie's South Kensington on Friday. Highlights include her birthday book, designed by Kate Greenaway and including the signatures of Mark Twain, Charles Dickens and Oscar Wilde (£700 to £1,000).

SARAH JANE CHECKLAND

Poteries Antique Centre, 271 Waterloo Road, Colbridge, Stoke-on-Trent, (0182 204455). Donington Park Exhibition Centre, Castle Donington, Leicestershire (01455 233495). Lamport Hall, Lamport, Northamptonshire (01552 595622). Westley Exhibition Centre (Hall 3), Westley Complex, London (01444 400570). Richard Green Gallery, 4 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-493 3939). Christie's South Kensington, 85 Old Brompton Road, London SW7 (0171-581 7611).

EASTER JUMBO CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Proverbial warning as writer's almost eaten by lions and awaiting death (5,5,6,11)
- 15 Providing nourishment until ration is redistributed (11)
- 16 An Indian commanding officer reported in island capital (7)
- 17 Navigator responsible for some Cornish pirates (7)
- 18 Marx meeting a remarkable person, such as Queequeg (9)
- 19 Change — for instance, say all the time (11)
- 20 Soldiers on annual test relating to muscular movement (5)
- 21 One who accepts the situation about a bill (7)
- 23 Made arrangement with swimming group in early learning centre (4,9)
- 24 Dog after £25 hairstyle (4-4)
- 27 Article returned provided it is unaffected (4)
- 28 Come out in the open and steal a march, perhaps (4,3,3)
- 30 As national hero, squadron leader isn't commonly a lifeless pilot (5,6)
- 33 Chair and Canal Turn causing complete disorder? (10)
- 35 Being rather tardy, look smart about it (7)
- 36 Mild green giving a very old Conservative bother (7)
- 38 Composer puts case for weapon without hesitation (5)
- 39 With cooked tripe one gets nearly all of the stomach lining (10)
- 41 Brontë season pronounced a trend-setter (4-6)
- 43 Persuading to talk, or leaving the platform (7,3)
- 46 Art of controlling people, say, when getting caught by crowd (10)
- 48 Guard's intended for Australian town, so-called (5)
- 51 Piner's sinister part for a musician (7)
- 52 Long-standing Arts course cut after entry by six to university (7)
- 54 What one may say thus after swearing is obvious (2,5)
- 56 Meeting to study border once circular letter's gone out (11)
- 57 A measure of Arab strength (10)
- 59 Titled woman back in the slammer (4)
- 61 One greeting drunk in New York in state of total blankness (8)
- 63 Plant to sow, say, old person's to think about (10)
- 65 Warlords endlessly parade with arms (7)
- 67 Make a contribution to deposit on home (5)
- 69 Foolish don met a nun, having an unwelcome date? (11)
- 70 One who stops at nothing once centre half dodged, say (9)
- 72 Time to celebrate wiping the slate clean (7)
- 73 Unusually lenient illustrator of 48 (7)
- 74 Limited approval given by team colleague? That's rough (11)
- 75 Showing equanimity, removing the long grass using the iron? (6,3,5,4,3,6)

DOWN

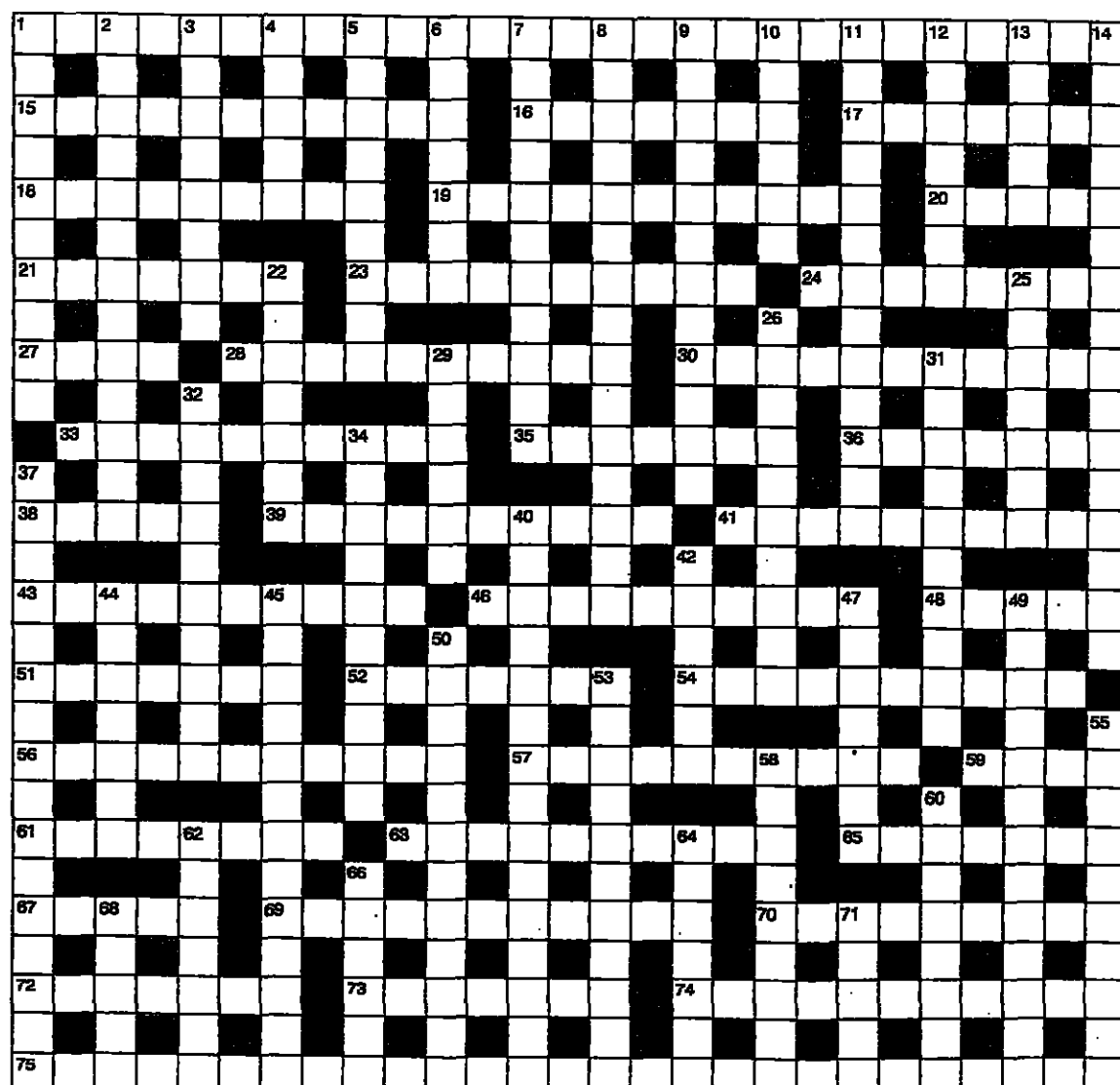
- 1 Stupefied by blows, wife-beater gets plastered (5-5)
- 2 Top player left anthem unfinished (13)
- 3 Is copied out like a serial story (8)
- 4 It's capable of moving a peeler to tears (5)
- 5 Public school heavyweight getting cross (9)
- 6 Awfully big elm you reportedly planted in the country (7)
- 7 Foreign money one checks for friars (11)
- 8 Fashion director eats hat and puts a stop to misbehaviour (5,3,4,3)
- 9 They say Richard Murphy's with it, showing total authority (12)
- 10 Having a rash from drug in filthy dwelling (6)
- 11 If it's unionised it requires more men (5,8)
- 12 Abuse making most graduates in country disheartened (7)
- 13 One way to catch fish on both sides of river, still (5)
- 14 Note about new courses offering materials man can exploit (7,9)
- 22 Guy's short dance in restaurant (7)
- 25 Opened a clasp for one's ear (7)
- 26 Relatively low overtime, so to speak, for transferring cargo (10)
- 29 Male batches offered for sale as slaves (6)
- 31 Former single person assessed and exempted (10)
- 32 Crime only children can never commit (10)
- 34 Making crooked, so making firm grip turn shaky (10)
- 37 Early African description of night-fall in Europe (3,4,9)
- 40 Against being a candidate, all the same (15)
- 42 Quarters containing bed for secretary (6)
- 44 Drink that increases heartfelt fondness, as toper might say? (7)
- 45 Condition of ground on part of course causing no offence (5,8)
- 47 Muscular type said to taste mushrooms (7)
- 49 Unable to confer as earnings and state's capital both get cut? Bother! (13)
- 50 Light music from Monteverdi? It could be (12)
- 53 Plant with blight mark seen in superficial position (11)
- 55 Stuck fast on a bridge, they may be gritted when in trouble (5,5)
- 58 In an awkward predicament, not changing one's position (2,3,4)
- 60 Fish caught on one's minute gaff, so to speak (8)
- 62 Valiant characters from part of USSR once (7)
- 64 Done? Then turn ham (7)
- 66 Figure standing right out (6)
- 68 Devise with king one part of political policy (5)
- 71 Peg's closing a porthole (5)

TEST YOUR WORD POWER IN OUR CROSSWORD COMPETITION

Prizes of £100 will be given for the first six correct solutions opened on Monday,

April 22, 1996. Entries should be sent to:

Easter Jumbo Crossword, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The winner and solution will be published on Saturday, April 27, 1996



NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

Times Two Easter Holiday Crossword

There are no prizes for this crossword. The answers will be published on Monday

ACROSS

- 1 Was sacrificially meek (4,4,1,4,2,3,9)
- 15 Having made loss (3,2,6)
- 16 Famously (7)
- 17 Appointment: putting in pillar-box (7)
- 18 Radio quiz (5,4)
- 19 Stimulant drug (11)
- 20 Butterfly: 100-eyed giant (Gk. myth) (5)
- 21 Fabulously wealthy man (7)
- 23 From the outside (10)
- 24 Extinct (giant) reptile (8)
- 27 New EU currency name (4)
- 28 Encircling, grasping (10)
- 30 Man of taste, knowledge (11)
- 33 Liable to be confused (10)
- 35 Row of houses (7)
- 36 Dispossess (7)
- 38 Musical drama (5)
- 39 Throat inflammation (10)
- 41 Before official issue, opening (3-7)
- 43 Of mad, RC doctrine, Mass (10)
- 46 Of good character: erect (10)
- 48 Hooded snake (5)
- 51 Admission to Christian life (7)
- 52 Thief (rhym. slang): flake of plant for drink (3,4)
- 54 Of control, supervision (10)
- 56 Less than paid for (in shop) (5,6)
- 57 Access from house to road (6,4)
- 59 Currency of Uruguay (4)
- 61 Typical instance: model (8)
- 63 Unvaried, boring (10)
- 65 Reduce in length (7)
- 67 Striped animal (5)
- 69 Of learning (11)
- 70 Planetary-position annual (4)
- 72 Temp. inactive (7)
- 73 Easily shattered (7)
- 74 Four-year period (11)
- 75 Watch sightless rodent trio's speed (5,5,4,3,3,4,3)

DOWN

- 1 Trunk-drilling bird (10)
- 2 No way! (3,2,4,4)
- 3 Inert (8)
- 4 Swedish currency (5)
- 5 (Mud) covering the foot (5-4)
- 6 Be magnet for (7)
- 7 Napoleon supporter (11)
- 8 Mortally ill (2,3,6,4)
- 9 Water-pressure pump (9,3)
- 10 Obstruction (golf once) (6)
- 11 Perfect tidiness (5-3,5)
- 12 Nazi secret police (7)
- 13 Item: Iceland assembly (5)
- 14 Births/deaths etc recording chief (4,7)
- 22 Breathing-tube (7)
- 25 The New World (7)
- 26 Tireless (10)
- 29 *Tristram Shandy* author (6)
- 31 Beseech (10)
- 32 Long-range planner (10)
- 34 Sir Walter Elliot's only reading (*Persuasion*) (10)
- 37 Worth serious consideration (3,2,2,7,2)
- 40 Subjective, vague: in Monet's style (15)
- 42 False (6)
- 44 Make better (7)
- 45 Moody (13)
- 47 Execution frame (7)
- 49 Southern Scotland working dog (6,7)
- 50 Splinter-group rivalry (12)
- 53 Desolate feeling (11)
- 55 One from Penzance (10)
- 58 Reckless villain (9)
- 60 Begin (pompous) (8)
- 62 Calm (one) down (7)
- 64 At an angle (7)
- 66 KwaZulu-Natal main port (6)
- 68 Less covered (5)
- 71 Afghan city: Earth (*anag.*) (5)

OUTDOORS

7

Life rises from the ashes

A waste
product from
coal is
providing new
farmland

There are few modern structures bigger or more visually offensive than the coal-fired power station. Its giant cooling towers are visible for miles, coughing out discoloured steam. Even a small unit will burn millions of tonnes of coal each year, delivering waste on a grand scale.

Look closer, however, and the picture is not as grim as it seems. The biggest waste product of all, pulverised fuel ash (PFA), the ash that is left after the coal is burnt, is finding new, dynamic uses.

Mounds of PFA left unattended have become home to legions of rare orchids; elsewhere, PFA has been landscaped and returned to farmland; artificial reefs have been sculpted from it, and lobsters, it appears, love it.

Twenty years ago, PFA was considered a plague — a dirty, worthless product. Large power stations such as Blyth, in north Yorkshire, dumped it into the North Sea. Gradually, it became clear that PFA was a malleable substance that could benefit industry. Now, about 25 per cent of the PFA produced is used in subsidiary industries such as the manufacture of cement and building blocks and, more unexpectedly, in skis and false teeth.

Laudable, no doubt, but this still leaves 75 per cent unaccounted for. At Drax power station, near Selby, north Yorkshire, an intelligent way forward has been pioneered.

Drax is Britain's biggest power station and the largest coal-fired unit in Europe. It burns 11 million tonnes of coal each year, producing 1.4 million tonnes of PFA, a sulphurous, greyish-grey powder as fine as icing sugar. When it was commissioned in 1973, it was clear that Drax would create unprecedented amounts of ash: a new approach was needed.

It was decided to landscape a mound on adjoining land. Now, two decades on, the mound, built on a former Ministry of Defence depot, is more of a hill, rising impressively out of flat farmland. A farmer crops and grazes it; last year it won a prestigious development award and is recognised under the European Community Eco Management Scheme. Two days a week it is opened as parkland to the public.

Close-up, it is an extraordinary achievement. The mound is 120ft high, covers 400 acres and is constantly growing. There is a "coal-face" to which, throughout the day, damped-down ash is fed by conveyor belt from the furnace. A hundred feet up, at the edge of the reclaimed farmland, is a viewing platform where the public can watch the reclamation taking place. When the PFA rises to meet this level, it will be given three feet of topsoil,

seeded and returned to parkland.

It is, however, hard to imagine it ever passing for a real hill. Its curves are too severe; from the base, it resembles the steep banks of a reservoir. If this offends the occasional walker, it does not bother the animals, says Ian Fenton, who runs Drax's materials handling department and oversees the mound's construction.

"We've got foxes, stoats, too many rabbits and roe deer. This place forms an oasis of wildlife in a sea of monoculture, the endless farmland." Silver birch, beech, holly and oak have all been planted and are thriving. Capitalising on this, Drax has just opened a nature study centre for local schoolchildren. Three trails

have been devised: a wildflower trail through the sheep meadows; a walk over the mound to see the construction in progress; and a trail through the woods. At its base there are ponds in which the rare great crested newt has made its home.

With generous topsoiling, it is perhaps no surprise that Drax's mound has been such a success. More surprising, however, has been the realisation that PFA, left alone, can provide a fertile environment for diverse wildflowers, especially orchids.

When coal is burnt, all its nutrients are destroyed. PFA, therefore, contains no nitrogen. All other elements, including iron, magnesium, potassium and sodium, however, survive the combustion

process and are more abundant than in ordinary soil. In less than three years, an abandoned PFA mound will abound with wild grasses; its extreme alkalinity makes it perfect for orchids. Each spring, Manchester's Carrington power station is bursting with pink marsh orchids, *Dactylorhiza*, a protected species.

Underwater, too, PFA is proving itself. Scientists at the Department of Oceanography at Southampton University have spent six years studying an artificial reef in Poole Bay. Their findings are optimistic.

In 1989, an artificial reef, made of solid blocks of PFA, was constructed in 12 metres of water. Monitoring has shown that, not only did the blocks prove chemically stable and

therefore of no danger to plant or fish life, but they attracted substantial numbers of lobsters. Dr Antony Jensen, who has headed the research, believes that "we may have stumbled upon something here that will not only be profitable in the long-term, but would bring important socioeconomic benefits".

A waste product from coal-fired power stations could go a long way towards resuscitating our fishing industry. Artificial steel and concrete reefs, he points out, ring Japan and Taiwan, and provide habitat for much of the farmed lobster population. If PFA can provide new farmland and habitat for rare orchids, why not a home for lobsters?

EDWARD MARRIOTT



Stuck up the creek without a paddle...

Sailing

At a conservative estimate, I'd say that the explosives and appeals to our Lord were running about neck and neck when I realised what I had done. I had run *Nutracker* aground at about the worst place and time imaginable. When I first felt her easy bounce on the water suddenly change to a pivot as her keel drilled into the east coast mud, I started to panic. Then I realised that we were well and truly stuck, having been going at about four knots under motor, and I felt worse. The echo-sounder read just 3.3ft. I'd always wondered how far off the bottom the transducer was located — now I knew.

Then I remembered it was slack water and that, within a few minutes, the ebb would begin, leaving *Nutracker* — a 1960-vintage, long-keel 35ft-cruiser with a 6ft draft — stranded on her beam ends in the mud. Within about two hours she would be lying with her mast pointing horizontally across the creek, with just a trickle of water running under her. To add a little extra spice, this was about to happen in a particularly embarrassing place — in the centre of Maldon in Essex on a Saturday afternoon.

I was stuck virtually outside the back door of the Queen's Head pub, where the sea-going regulars would have a grandstand view of my boat sinking ever deeper into the mire.

It had all come about because my girlfriend and I were paying more attention to the charms of the Victorian seafront at Maldon and waving to friends, such as John Yardley, a local shipwright who happened to be on the quayside, than concentrating on what we were doing. Motoring with the last of the flood, we had just passed the old boatyard where *Nutracker* occupied a mud berth for nine months during her refit last year, when we shuddered to a halt. The Blackwater river, which runs up through the town, narrows quickly as you pass the boatyards and the pubs and, as I now know, you have to be very careful when turning before running back down river with the beginning of the ebb.

We had started our journey early in the morning from Bradwell, at the edge of the estuary and, with a light northwesterly and a good three hours of flood tide left, had decided to leave a trip out to sea for another day and explore inland instead.

The easy conditions seemed to lull me into a state of complacency as we sailed past Osea Island and then Heybridge Basin under jib, staysail and main. We then dropped the foresails and turned on the motor for the last twists and turns up to Maldon as high water approached at about 11am.

It all went wrong when I turned slightly to port to give me extra room to begin my turning circle to starboard. Once on the mud, my first reaction was to put the engine in reverse. Already my mind was rushing ahead, wondering if I could get someone out in a boat to pull

her off, but I knew there would be very little time left before the ebb made that impossible. The engine then got some serious abuse as I tugged the revs and paddled the tiller in a vain effort to work her free. By then I was already thinking about how I would try to save her from damage if she did end up on her side. I had recently read that blowing up the rubber dinghy and placing it midships under the topside, where the weight of the boat would be taken, can help. However, there is at least 3ft of mud to sink into first and the dinghy might have ended up being buried.

Techniques for getting off, once stuck, include heeling the boat over to reduce her draft. I thought of flaking — or spreading out — the anchor chain on the port-side deck but there did not seem enough time.

If I had been a little more cool-headed, I would have thought of pumping out the 65-gallon water tank, which lies above the keel, and even rigging the spinnaker pole to swing out at right angles, again over the port or leeward side, so that I could hang heavy weights from it, including the dinghy and my crew. But time was of the essence and I needed to exhaust all immediate remedies.

After a few minutes, I saw the first ripples around the old wooden piles on the quay, signalling the beginning of the ebb. Behind us, in the creek, the boats were turning to face the new tide. Having asked my girlfriend to stand on the transom to try to swing the bow up — all of her 8½ stone making no difference — I decided to try one last option. Instead of reversing the engine I put it into forward gear, knowing that if this failed we would be stranded for sure. The boat edged forward a few inches before I swung the lever back into reverse and she seemed to rock back slightly. I did it again and this time, to my immense relief, she rocked even more and then, slowly, began to move backwards.

We got her out and soon were sailing back down the river, waving again to Mr Yardley, as if nothing had happened. I felt like we had got out of jail. We'd been stuck at least until 11pm that night and, even then, after unloading around in the mud, we may not have been able to get her off and would have needed help.

The chances are that she might have escaped serious damage as she sank into the mud, but it would definitely not have improved an old wooden yacht for her to have taken all her weight on one side for 12 hours.

Maldon had been a bit like one of those beautiful tropical plants which draw their insect victims to them with their bright colours and attractive scent, only to poison the little creatures once they come within range.

Next time I will be on my guard as I visit Maldon for some sightseeing at high water.

EDWARD GORMAN



The Nutracker, back in deep water after her embarrassing brush with a mud bank

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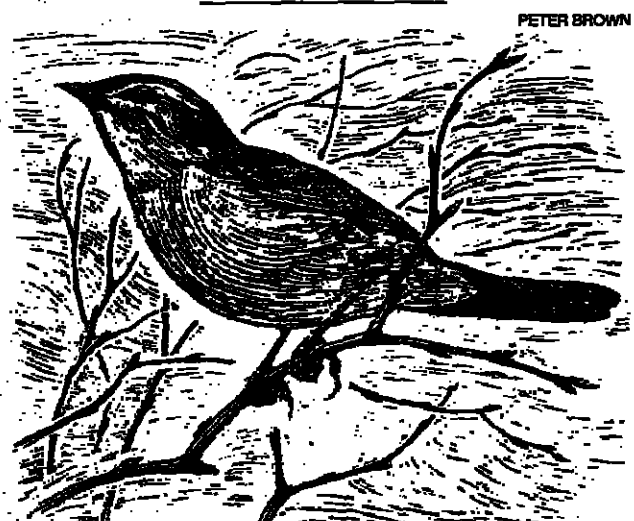
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Busy feathering their nests

Feather report

PETER BROWN



Willow warblers build their domed nests on the ground.

woodpeckers. When woodpeckers fly out of a bush or tree, they clatter wildly through the branches to alarm any predators, and practically every time they lose a few feathers.

Another source must be ground birds such as pheasants, some of whose smaller feathers get knocked out as they brush through the bracken. No doubt dead birds also provide many nest-linings.

Small garden birds generally have about 1,500 feathers on their body. Swans can have up

to 25,000, and one usually sees a good few of them floating about on the water wherever there are swans swimming.

Birds sport four kinds of feather. There are flight feathers and body-feathers, which are locked together into an unbroken web by thousands of tiny hooks and grooves on their edges. Beneath these are found the soft down feathers — the ones most easily shed — and some tiny thread-like feathers called filoplumes, which seem to convey messages to the bird and tell it

when its feathers are dishevelled and need preening.

Some of the feathers among the down crumble to produce what is called powder-down — a waxy powder which spreads through the surface feathers and helps to waterproof them. Sometimes when a bird crashes into a window-pane it leaves a ghostly outline of itself on the glass. This is where the powder-down has been shaken out of it by the impact.

Birds that collect feathers for their nests want them for one of the reasons why they grew on their first owner, namely, that they provide marvellous insulation — this time for the eggs.

Willow warblers are not the only common species in search of them. Their cousins, the chiffchaffs, need them; many finches collect them; long-tailed tits find up to 2,000 for their cosy nests. House martins catch them in the air. In fact, if you want to see a bird in the spring, first find a feather — and a sharp-eyed bird will surely come to take it away.

DERWENT MAY

What's about birds — watch for the first returning swallows. Twitchees — purple heron at Pevensy Levels in East Sussex; white-bellied diver still on the Blyth estuary in Northumberland. Details from Birdline, 0891 702222. Calls cost 40p a minute cheap rate, 50p at all other times.

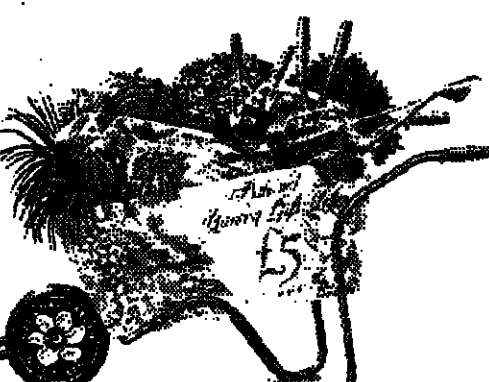
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Granting creature comforts

Birds, trees and insects have rights these days — and builders can be refused planning permission for ignoring them

The breeding habits of great crested newts were once of little interest to planners and builders — but times have changed. Environmental concerns are now a vital consideration — and restrictions no longer stop at trees.

As well as the primary considerations of location, ground conditions, access and the provision of mains services, builders have to take environmental issues into account otherwise planning permission will be refused.

If environmental factors are considered when identifying land for development, even if everything else is favourable, the decision may be taken not to pursue the site," says John Kirkham, planning manager of Bryant Homes.

Great crested newts are a good example. When Bryant Homes decided to develop a site it had owned for many years in Solihull, West Midlands, builders discovered a colony of newts in ponds on the site.

In the advice of an ecologist, a joint working party from the builders and local authority worked out a plan to create a new habitat for the protected species a few miles away, without which building work could not have gone ahead.

The change in attitude started to affect builders in the late 1970s. Legislation gathered momentum throughout the 1980s, creating a list of "un-touchables", including trees, hedges, wild flowers, ponds and birding and nesting grounds for insects, birds and mammals.

Challenges for breaking the law were established under The Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the maximum fine for the wilful damage of a tree subject to a preservation order is £20,000. Some local authorities have taken offenders to court. In December 1995, Woolley Construction of Flockton, Huddersfield, was fined £25,000 for destroying two 100-



A preserved avenue of maple trees creates a mature landscape for new houses in Bingley, West Yorkshire

year-old sycamores, made the subject of protection orders by Kirklees Council in 1989 when the builders first applied for planning permission.

In 1994, Bryant Homes started to develop a five-acre site at Bingley, West Yorkshire, which was divided diagonally by an avenue of mature maple trees subject to preservation orders, and included an adjoining

two acres of woodland. As well as preserving the maples, planners insisted that the woodland of ash, oak and sycamore with birch and holly was surveyed, and that necessary tree surgery be carried out. The builders consulted arboriculturists to survey the trees, most around 50 years old, and took their advice on the felling of four, leaving piles of chopped wood

at random to create wildlife and wild-flower habitats. "We knew from experience elsewhere that the Woodland Trust charity is interested in maintaining woodlands and we offered ownership of it to them at no cost," says Bryant's John Kirkham.

Bryant Homes gave the Trust £35,000, a sum it hopes will generate enough income to maintain the wood for ten years. Nick Allison, woodland officer for the Trust in the North East, says: "There was scope for everyone to benefit from this deal. The developer, who did not want to retain the long-term management of the wood in an area it would no longer be associated with, passed the liability to us."

"We can preserve the wood for its habitat and as a local amenity. And we can persuade local people to help us to look after it."

At least ten of the 32 four-bedroom, detached homes that have been built on the site — priced around £155,000 — overlook the wood. The avenue of maples creates a mature landscape within the estate.

Wragley Homes, a small building company in Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, is building 22 three- and four-bedroom, semi-detached homes

and townhouses, priced between £79,950 and £89,950, on a former mill site near a river. The area is home to a duck population and is the nesting site for herons and kingfishers.

Builders had to comply with the National Rivers Authority ruling that no debris should pollute Elphinstone Brook at Mytholmroyd, near Halifax, while buildings were being demolished or foundations laid.

Most of the mature trees on the three-and-a-half-acre site were subject to preservation orders (metal tags on the trunk identify them by number) and planning permission was subject to almost half an acre of overgrown land being retained as a wildlife habitat.

Even when legally removing "a few wispy sycamores which had self-seeded", local people rang the planners to complain.

A consortium development by builders Westbury, Beazer and Ideal Homes of around 3,000 homes — ranging from one-bedroom flats at £40,000 to five-bedroom executive detached homes at £150,000 — at Locking Castle, Weston-Super-Mare, was delayed by the fish and plant life in two disused, water-filled pits.

The wildlife in and around one pit, which was a nesting ground for swans and home to several types of fish and rushes, had to be transferred to a temporary habitat a mile away. When builders had finished work on the pit, creating a new pond which needed around nine months to stabilise, the creatures and plants were successfully returned. Builders spent £82,000 on the pond and £20,000 on landscaping and rehabilitating the habitat.

At the second pond, an ecological survey, which cost the builders £12,000, revealed the presence of great crested newts and they obtained a licence from English Nature to relocate them.

Chris Pratt, design and technical manager for Ideal Homes South West Ltd, says: "Gone are the days when builders moved on to a site with their machines and began to dig foundations."

"Now we must be aware of all kinds of considerations from the archaeological to the ecological. We cannot save everything but we try to save as much as we can. We don't always get it right, but we're trying."

LYNNE GREENWOOD

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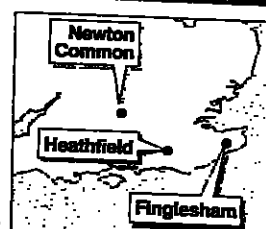
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CHERYL TAYLOR

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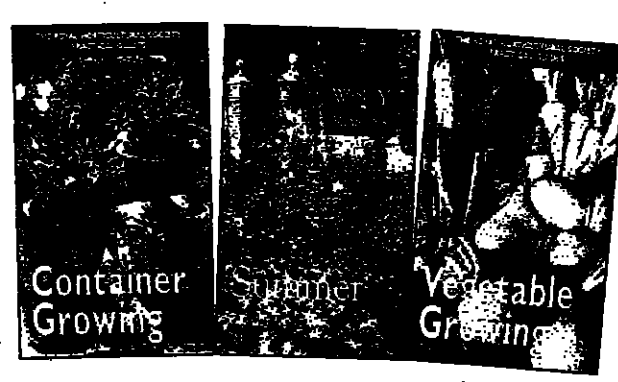
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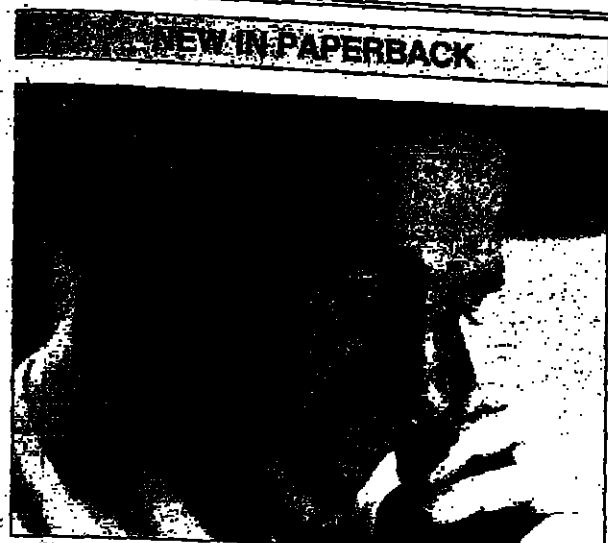
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BOOKS

13

We are vastly amused

Andrew Roberts relishes the true story of Victoria and Albert

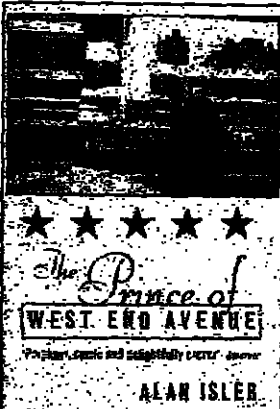


Jenkins: a disturbing account of Thatcher's politics

■ ACCOUNTABLE TO NONE
The Tory Nationalisation of Britain
By Simon Jenkins
Penguin, £7.99

SIMON JENKINS' deceptively even-tempered study of Thatcherism begins with the new Tory leader fishing in her handbag for a copy of Hayek's *The Constitution of Liberty* to bang on the table. It ends with a stark warning about the consequences of the British electorate's constitutional inertia. In between, Jenkins gives a disturbing account of Thatcher's politics, testing the Tories' initial promise in 1979 to reduce the power and scope of the state against their subsequent record in the "great domains" of public administration.

The portrait that emerges is of a second-rate, philistine imperialism, gripped by a defensive desire to impose at all costs government will upon diversity. Military or colonial-administrative analogies abound (the reader sympathises with the local councillor who complains of virtual "artillery bombardment" to suppress local autonomy) but it is what Will Hutton has called the State's "chronic reluctance to protect the public interest" that should really cause offense. Nevertheless, says Jenkins, if we end the century feeling ill-served by agents of central government it will be partly our own fault, as citizens for not protecting both our liberties and our obligations with a written constitution.



■ THE PRINCE OF WEST END AVENUE
By Alan Isler
Vintage, £5.99

THE YEAR is 1978, and our story is set in New York's Emma Lazarus home, resting place for retired Jewish gentilefolk. A hotbed of clashing egos, the in-house production of *Hamlet* is fraught with vitriolic personal politics, and against this backdrop narrator Otto Korner, cast as the Ghost and then Hamlet, ponders his own existence. At the Emma Lazarus there is also *amour*, ranging from the sad disjunction between the libidos of elderly women and men, to Korner's own unexpected passion: at 83, he has fallen for physiotherapist Mandy Dattner. Isler's prose is witty and poignant and he has made Korner, freighted with secrets, an aptly tortured Prince.

■ RIDING THE RAP
By Elmore Leonard
Penguin, £4.99

WITH John Travolta starring in the film version of *Get Shorty*, these are heady days for Elmore Leonard. Although essentially a genre writer, his novels are distinguished by their radiant, exact dialogue and sharp characterisation. This latest thriller is about a small-time crook, Chip Ganz, and his quest to kidnap a bookie with Mafia links. His sidekick — a pragmatic Latino and a fast-talking black guy — recall the hitmen in *Pulp Fiction*; hardly surprising, since Tarantino has said that Leonard helped him to "find his style".



■ DIANA
The Goddess Who Hunts Alone
By Carlos Fuentes
Bloomsbury, £5.99

ON NEW YEAR'S EVE, 1969, Carlos Fuentes embarked on a passionate affair with the American actress Jean Seberg. A quarter of a century later, after Seberg's grisly, lonely death in a Paris backstreet, Fuentes recreates their love in this hauntingly erotic novel. The story of their relationship is both an elegy to Seberg and to the wild, optimistic times in which they met; Fuentes's prose, even at its most self-indulgent, shines with an evocative sensual power. Ultimately, this honest, if solipsistic, testament of youth by an aged Don Juan is desperately poignant.

■ FISHER'S FACE
By Jan Morris
Penguin, £7.50

EDWARD VII, who loved Jack Fisher, once said that he had been all round the world but had never really been in it. There was indeed something unworldly about the punchy little admiral who dragged the Royal Navy out of the age of sail and into the 20th century. Jan Morris has been haunted by Fisher since the 1940s and this book is a wonderful portrait of her pin-up and of the spacious and colourful era when Britannia ruled the waves. Even in old age he never lost his gusto: 70 years after his death it is still infectious.

■ THE SMELL OF APPLES
By Mark Behr
Abacus, £5.99

IN THIS masterly first novel Behr writes in the voice of Marmus, an innocently observant 11-year-old Afrikaner boy whose glamorous, dotting parents are pillars of 1970s Capetown society. During an idyllic childhood Marmus has unquestioningly absorbed his parents' belief in the Afrikaners' divine right to rule South Africa. But he wonders why no one has been punished for torturing a coloured boy and why his aunt has been labelled a Communist. A disturbing story which subtly lays bare the twisted logic of apartheid.

MALCOLM BRADBURY

Dangerous Pilgrimages

■ DANGEROUS PILGRIMAGES
Trans-Atlantic Mythologies and the Novel
By Malcolm Bradbury
Penguin, £8.99

PROFESSOR BRADBURY explores realms of the imagination, American and European. He contemplates the Renaissance "discoverers" depicting a newfound Eden. Grand Tour visions of the Old World and contemporary "frequent flyers" like Martin Amis, investigating the traffic of fancies across the ocean. He is particularly illuminating in his sociopolitical sweep while homing in on authors of specific interest: Dickens's revenge on the United States with *Martin Chuzzlewit*; James and Hawthorne; Fitzgerald in jazz age Paris.

Alison Burns, Glyn Brown, Hazel Leslie, Nicki Household, Jason Cowley, Lucy Leithbridge, Kate Bassett

WITH the BBC about to sully yet further the name of revisionist history with its documentary accusing Queen Victoria of being John Brown's "lover", the timing of this charming, intelligent, sane book could not be better. Richard Hough has produced a short, splendidly opinionated and elegantly written history of one of the few genuine love affairs in the history of the British monarchy.

"There is no-one to call me



Albert sketched by Victoria

Victoria! the queen cried in her agony of grief when Albert succumbed to typhoid on December 14, 1861. Hough manages to recreate the tragedy in a way that is both moving and scrupulously accurate.

He hints that there may even be something to Victoria's famous suspicion that the Prince of Wales's dissipation may have been partly responsible for his father's death. When he heard that the prince had slept with the actress Nellie Clifden, Albert, already in bad health, went up

■ VICTORIA & ALBERT
By Richard Hough
Richard Cohen, £20

to Cambridge and insisted on taking a walk around the city with his son, lecturing him on his "depraved... vice and debauchery". The cold he caught on that freezing November day aggravated his illness and eventually killed him.

Hough's earlier works include impressive studies of the marriages of Winston Churchill and King Edward VII. He has a natural feel for describing relationships and no fear of expressing forthright opinions. He dismisses the John Brown conjecture with contempt, showing how it originated in obscene Parisian jokes and propaganda.

Hough's hard work in the royal archives in the Round Tower of Windsor Castle, has enabled him to present Albert as a far more engaging figure than the boring, Teutonic dogooder of popular myth. The story of the prince's second greatest achievement, the Great Exhibition, is told with a fine attention to detail. The prince's greatest achievement, preventing Palmerston from getting Britain into a war with America in 1861, is also gripping stuff.

The profit from the Great Exhibition is still subsidising students to study the arts and sciences. The Crystal Palace itself was moved to Sydenham, where it spectacularly burnt down on the night of November 3, 1936. One of the spectators, from far away as the South Downs, was the young Hough.

Adams meets Paisley

HEINEMANN is to co-publish *Before the Dawn*, the controversial memoirs of Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams. It will partner Brandon Books of Dingle, Co Kerry, which commissioned the book a couple of years ago and which has published short stories and non-fiction by Adams. But lest anyone should accuse it of republican bias, the same month it will also publish *Persecuting Zeal*, an even-handed theological appraisal of the Rev Ian Paisley.

■ AS Britain's Agriculture Minister gets hanged, drawn and quartered in Brussels, *Gollancz* is rushing through a book that advocates an animal Bill of Rights to be incorporated into the European Convention. But the Price of Meat by Danny Pennman, commissioned before the present crisis, also examines such issues as molecular pharmacology and argues that it is possible for BSE and other viruses to cross the species barrier.

■ BOOKER chairman Carmen Calli continues to drop veiled hints about the sort of books that might not make this year's shortlist. "On the whole, people should not write novels," she declared recently. "Novelists should write novels." Fortunately, last year's chairman, outgoing Tory MP George Walden, has not yet found a publisher for his novel in which the population succumbs to dwarfism. This despite his agent describing it as "a brilliant satire".

■ RICHARD FORD'S *Independence Day* and *Claire Messud's When the World was Steady* have been nominated for the \$15,000 1996 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction by American writers. The other nominees are *Madison Smartt Bell* (All Souls Rising), *William H. Gass* (The Tunnel) and *A.J. Verdelle* (The Good Negro).

■ MANUSCRIPTS are invited for the £3,000 1996 Saga Prize for black British-born novelists, funded by the travel group. The winning novel will be published by Virago. Inquiries to Saga Prize, Saga Building, Middleborough Square, Folkestone, Kent CT20 1AZ.

An exploration of the unspoiled corners of our once green and pleasant land

Piety and grace: the Savage monument at Elmley Castle, Worcestershire, from *England — Travels through an Unwrecked Landscape* by Candida Lycett Green, with photographs by Bill Burlington (Pavilion, £16.99)

Faith seeks hope and charity

FAITH FOX arrives in the world to a furor. Her bouncy, shiny haired, thoroughly good sort of a mother, Holly, dies giving birth to her, and nobody in sunny, affluent Surrey can quite believe it. This reminder of our mortality and of the fates' penchant for springing surprises provides the keynote to a novel spiked with paradox.

Holly's demise throws her numerous friends and family, reeling from the extinction of her energy and vigour, into a different gear. Thomasina, Holly's mother, refuses to acknowledge Faith and disappears off to Egypt with a dashing colonel. Exhausted

■ FAITH FOX
By Jane Gardam
Sinclair Stevenson, £15.99

and bewildered, Andrew, the widower, struggles to balance baby with his job as a hospital doctor and, in the end, has to acknowledge defeat.

Packing Faith into the car, he heads for Yorkshire where he hopes to hand his daughter over to his brother Jack. Twenty years older than Andrew, quasi saint and ascetic, Jack runs an unheated, chaotic religious foundation on the moors and is married to Jocasta, who is Andrew's former lover. He is also stepfather to her dyslexic troubled

son, Philip. Meanwhile, only a few miles away, Dolly and Toots, the paternal grandparents incapacitated by age and illness, wait patiently for the call to help — which never arrives.

Drilling through the layers of our culture and geography to expose clashing colours and texture, the novel is built up on contrast — a celibate marriage, a mad old woman's sex appeal, a so-called Christian community sheltering Tibetan refugees — underpinned by the suggestion of anarchy lurking just around the corner. Hurdled on journeys from south to north, north to south, the baby tossed like a parcel

from pillar to post, the reader is left breathless and braced against disaster, and yet remains curiously reassured by the moral imperative that Jack lays upon himself: "to put things right".

With its strong whiffs of death, religion and knock-about farce, *Faith Fox* is funny and admirable but not likeable, being too robust for something as mild as affection. Twice winner of the Whitbread Award, Jane Gardam writes with a dark and buoyant energy which continually challenges and provokes.

ELIZABETH BUCHAN

In England's sari state

■ ANITA AND ME
By Meera Syal
Flamingo, £9.99

Her ambition in life is to look cool and be worthy of the attention of Anita Rutter, an older and sassier neighbour who wears mini-skirts and make-up. The result is a well-observed comedy about the clash of two cultures — Indian respectability versus Western liberalism. In Meena's case, this clash translates into "being nice to Pinky and Baby" versus "being in with Anita".

Apart from the scrapes that our mischievous heroine gets into, and the shame they heap upon her family, the antics of her neighbours in their small mining village provide the main entertainment. Syal has put her comic talents to good use, with delightful descriptions of fat, cackling "utterly fire-resistant Aunties" cooking *chapatis* over naked gas rings. The prose is sometimes stumbling and inelegant but always honest. Sometimes it is a little more vulgar than necessary, which cheapens its poignancy.

ANJANA AHUJA

Flirting with operatic disaster

■ A SCHOOL FOR LOVERS
By Jill Paton Walsh
Black Swan, £6.99

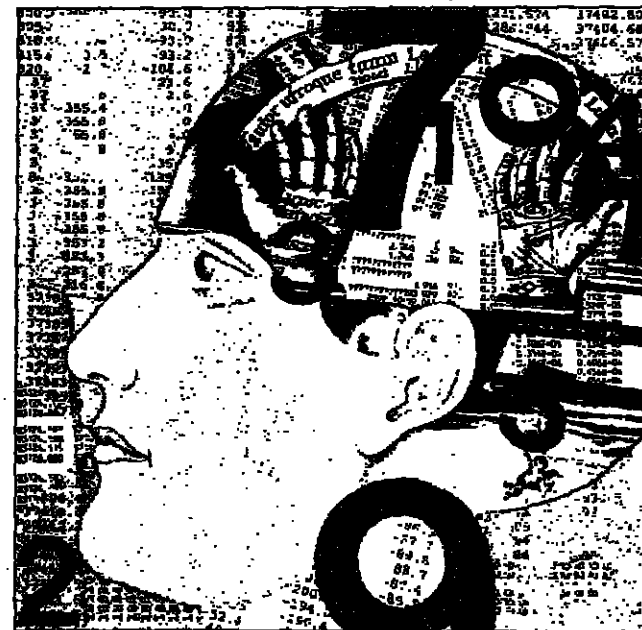
IT IS generally agreed that the best thing about *Così fan tutte* is Mozart's music. Taken out of its operatic context, da Ponte's libretto is rather ridiculous, with its misogynistic notion that "all women are the same" and heavy dependence on disguise. Nevertheless, it is the plot which Jill Paton Walsh has bravely chosen to revise. In *A School for Lovers*, first published in 1989, she takes the story out of historic Naples and plunks it down in present-day Oxford.

In *Così fan tutte*, two young men are goaded by an older philosopher, Don Alfonso, to test the love of their two, trusted fiancées. Disguised but sure, they each set out to woo the other's betrothed. In this novel, a sinister, homosexual muscology don, Alfie, is furious when two of his acolytes come back from the vacation engaged. He bets the boys, Ferdie and William, that their fiancées are as fickle as all women: they could just as easily fall for the other. Keen for the money and convinced of their victory, they accept.

It is from this point that the novel's plot begins to stumble over its conceit. The ripe conditions needed for Alfie to carry out his plan are unlikely, if not ludicrous: he has access to an enormous and dilapidated stately home; he, anonymously, employs both girls there; though good friends, the girls could not recognise each other's boyfriend. And although all four lovers are working there together, the engaged couples never meet. Such plot devices, though they might have gone down all right with an 18th-century audience, are bound to be a bit of a risk with the 20th-century reader. And there are times

TOWARD A SCIENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS 1996

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NEW ON CD: Mozart taken on an un-Viennese whirl; first entrant in the Arnold cycle race; Nat King Cole mining; another "new Oasis"

OPERA

John Higgins

■ MOZART
Die Zauberflöte
Mannion/Dessay/Blochwitz/Scharinger/Hagen/Les Arts Florissants/Christie
Erato 0630-12705-2
(2 CDs)***

WILLIAM CHRISTIE had conducted no Mozart opera since his student days before he took on *The Magic Flute* at Aix. It turned out to be the hit of the 1994 festival and last year's as well and has gone straight onto disc with no changes of cast.

Christie brought his own band, Les Arts Florissants, numbering about 50 and using period instruments. They never sound aggressive, but Christie has the ability to make his orchestra sound bigger than it actually is, notably in part of the overture and in the March of Sarastro's priests, which opens Act II. Christie is quoted as promising a "different Flute", by which he meant one that was not hidebound by heavy Viennese tradition. And he has kept to his word: the long, silvery cadenza for the Three Ladies right at the start of the opera sums up the Christie approach. And most agreeable it is too. All is brisk, precise and very good-humoured.

Robert Carsen's production, which used every inch of Aix's Théâtre de l'Archêve, took a similarly benign view of Mozart. There are no real baddies in *The Flute* and the Queen of the Night can sit down at the same table as Sarastro. At the end the singers throw off their costumes implying that the whole world — maybe even the audience — can be part of Sarastro's elect.

This bonhomous view of humanity flows over into the recording, which draws almost entirely on youngish performers. Christie makes some of his instruments behave like soloists and some of his singers sound like instruments. In the exquisite *Bei Männern*, Pamina (Rosa

resonances of Beethoven's and Mahler's last completed symphonies — followed a period of illness and severe depression. Arnold later described himself as having "been through hell". The music is spare in the extreme: the second movement consists largely of rather desolate duetting between pairs of instruments, and although the third movement initially returns to more familiar Arnold territory (a boisterous Scherzo), its middle section is again pared down to bare essentials. The finale has Mahlerian tendencies but is never as lush: the composer's self-confessed "complete sur-



Arnold: deliberately bleak

render to despair" is susceptible to no grand Romantic gestures.

Complete Arnold cycles are also in hand from Conifer and Chandos, but the new, improved National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland acquires itself admirably here under Andrew Penny, and its navigation of the cycle is likely to prove stiff competition.

■ SØRENSEN
Sterbende Garten: The Echoing Garden
Hirsch/Danish National Radio Symphony
Orchestra/Søgaard
daca 9.2340.39***

THE violin concerto *Sterbende Garten* (Decaying Gardens) won for the Danish composer Bent Sørensen the prestigious Nordic Council Music Prize of 1996. To describe his starting-point, the composer summons the visual image of an old, overgrown garden in which the original contours of its design are just visible through dense undergrowth.

Sometimes it sounds like an exotic garden, with the chattering of birds and beasts depicted high on strings and woodwind. This is not essentially a pictorial piece, however; rather the creation of a sound world evocative of decay and transience, though with structural pillars still faintly discernible.

Rebecca Hirsch is the excellent violin soloist, and the coupling is the six-movement choral symphony, *The Echoing Garden*, in which an atmosphere of decay is again powerfully conjured — this time sustained over an ambitious 40-minute span.



Christie: bigger sound

Mannion) plays flute to the bassoon of Papageno (Anton Scharinger). Mannion's princess is demure, with the notes occasionally having to be squeezed out, but she sounds like an adolescent. She could scarcely be older in the light of Natalie Dessay's very young Queen of the Night. There is a little bit of rage at the start of her Act II aria, but otherwise this Queen is too sweet and true to be a real villainess.

Anton Scharinger is the sole Viennese representative in a highly international cast and it shows in his delivery of some of the spoken dialogue, quickfire in a way nobody else can match. It is a confidential, sympathy-winning performance in the old Austrian style of Erich Kunz. Hans Peter Blochwitz's Tamino is all princely grace and even tone; he never raises his voice except in a brief altercation with the Sprecher (Willard White).

The smaller parts are all carefully cast, with special approval for the young bass Reinhard Hagen (Sarastro) Linda Kitchen (a characterful Papageno) and the exemplary Three Boys, one of France's contributions.

In this joyful set a final word of praise must go to the glockenspiel of Gerald Martin Moore, keyed, we are told, in London.

ORCHESTRAL

Barry Millington

■ ARNOLD
Symphony No 9
National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland/Penny
Naxos 5.53340***

SO extraordinarily bleak is Malcolm Arnold's Ninth Symphony — with a painfully protracted slow finale — that the work has never before been committed to disc. Was this really what the composer intended? Arnold answers firmly in the affirmative, in an interview appended to this recording, the second issue of the new complete Arnold cycle on budget-label Naxos.

The Ninth — which has

NEW ON VIDEO: A degree in well-meaning melodrama; Roger Rabbit for Easter; Phil Silvers back on parade

HIGHER LEARNING

20:20 Vision, 15, 1995

JOHN SINGLETON'S ambitious film uses university life as a microcosm of American society. Racial disharmony, neo-Nazis, rich and poor, same-sex relationships: some student somnolence on campus is grappled with these issues. Omar Epps is our identification figure, a freshman on an athletics scholarship who expects an easy ride. The film means well, though a final flourish of melodrama makes it more of a cartoon than necessary. With Laurence Fishburne. Available to rent.

A CITY OF SADNESS

Artificial Eye, 15, 1989

HOU HSIAO-HSIEN'S demanding and magisterial fresco of life in turbulent postwar Taiwan, tracing the fortunes of one family during the years following Japan's occupation. Using lengthy takes and a fixed camera, Hou fills the screen with the complex texture of daily life. Some political points will sail over our heads, but the emotional resonances, visual delights and command of detail on an epic scale ensure compelling viewing.

THE DOUBLE-HEADED EAGLE

Academy, E, 1973

NO COMMENTARY accompanies Lutz Becker's studiously researched documentary about Hitler's rise to power. Instead, tightly edited footage from newsreels, home movies and the commercial cinema is used to build a gripping portrait of a postwar society racked by excess and poverty, and a people prey to disillusionment. Images of Dietrich and Josephine Baker mingle with Nazi rallies; Prussian bigwigs leading the good life contrast with the ravenous unemployed. This was one of the early film ventures of producer David Putnam.

THE ROGER RABBIT GIFT PACK

Walt Disney, PG

EASTER being the season for bunnies, out pops the frantic Roger Rabbit, scampering full-tilt through



The trouble with education: John Singleton's *Higher Learning* presents life on campus as a microcosm of contemporary America

a tape consisting of the feature film *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, plus three spin-off shorts. *Tummy Trouble*, *Trail Mix-Up* and *Roller Coaster Rabbit*. The blend of animation and live-action in Robert Zemeckis's film is an incredible technical achievement, though as a cartoon character Roger Rabbit appears merely obnoxious next to manic ancestors such as Bugs Bunny or Daffy Duck.

SGT BILKO

Fox, U

TO COINCIDE with the release of the unlabeled, unnecessary Steve Martin movie, 18 episodes from Phil Silvers's original television show are now being released, three to a tape. Particular delights include *The Ear-ling Contest*, with lanky Fred Gwynne as "the Stomach", *Dinner at Sowick's* and *The Face on the Recruiting Poster* (the face, by an

error, belongs to that beaming barrel, Doberman). Few television comedy series since have managed the same fusion of brilliant characterisations, witty dialogue and droll turns of plot.

FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED

Warner, 18, 1969

AND SO he is, though not before an exhaustive catalogue of ghoulish

Hammer shocks inspired by the business of organ transplants. Peter Cushing, as the good Doctor, draws on his large reserves of acid countenance, and director Terence Fisher ploughs through the mayhem with tenacity. *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell*, Hammer's final *Frankenstein* offering, is also available.

GEOFF BROWN

VOCAL

Hilary Finch

HANDEL

La Resurrezione

Les Musiciens du Louvre/Minkowski

Archiv 447 767-2***

IT WAS Easter Sunday 1708,

30 years before *Messiah* and, thanks to a papal ban on opera, Handel was sharpening his dramatic teeth on a seasonal oratorio to be performed for the Marquis Ruspoli in Rome. Elaborate painted backdrops; a 35-strong string band, led by Corelli; oboes, trumpets, trombones. It was quite an occasion.

And that is exactly what comes over in this recording from Marc Minkowski's Musiciens du Louvre. Recitatives flow free and fast tempos are risk-taking and arias are handled with considerable swagger. This, after all, has to do with the resolution of supernatural conflict, no less, and the contretemps between



Handel: seasonal oratorio

Lucifer and the Angel has to be heard to be believed.

Holy Saturday night. The gates of Hell swing open with a breathless angelic flourish from the larynx of soprano Annick Massis. She fences in fierce recitative with Laurent Naouri's agile bass Lucifer who, despite his name, cannot stand the sudden light, but rather hopes it may all be in his honour. Handel, of course, enjoys it all immensely, and swiftly moves from Stygian darkness to that of the soul as Mary Magdalene (Jennifer

Smith) grieves and Cleophas (mezzo Linda Maguire) lends a sympathetic ear.

St John (John Mark Ainsley, perfectly cast) adds his own reassurance in a sensuously inflected Italianate aria and the first to see the Sun/Son rise. Satan's last stand rolls into a deep bass free-fall, and Maddalena approaches the tomb with recorders and muted oboe. The Risen Christ is seen, in a shrewd dramatic coup, through the eyes of Mary, Cleophas, the Angel and a radiant, delectably recorded orchestra.

JAZZ

Clive Davis

DIANA KRALL

All For You

Impulse! 11642***

EVERY

so often comes the frisson of hearing a new talent that already seems equipped for any challenge. Many people experienced just such a reaction last year on hearing

Diana Krall's British debut, *Only Trust Your Heart*. With this sultry tribute to Nat King Cole, the young Canadian singer-pianist more than confirms her early promise.

Krall is understandably more interested in the jazzier end of Cole's output, far from the bland, easy-listening ambience of *Ramblin' Rose*. With bassist Paul Keller and former Harry Connick guitarist Russell Malone as her quick-witted foils, she weaves an ethereal path through *Hit That Jive Jack, Gee Baby Ain't I Good to You* and *When I Grow Too Old to Dream*. The sensual swing of the 1950s Cole album *After Midnight* is one of her avowed models. Though she has no Harry, Edison to blow gossamer lines behind her, her buoyant keyboard work ensures that the excitement never sags.

■ ELLIS & BRANFORD

MARSALIS

Loved Ones

Columbia 483634**

LANGUOROUS

father-and-son duets from New Orleans's

most famous dynasty. Branford puts aside his hip-hopping homeboy image for once, reminding us instead of the gloriously burnished tone he can produce on tenor ballads.

The Gershwin's *Liza* is a characteristically off-beat selection, and the more familiar *Stella by Starlight* comes up resoundingly fresh. The older Marsalis's over-respectful piano set pieces — among them *Mis Oris Regrets* — lack the same verve, however.

POP EP

David Sinclair

MANSUN

One

Parlophone 7243 8 82786**

AS WITH

previous efforts to find the new Beatles or Bob Dylan, the search for "the next Oasis" will doubtless prove futile, but quite a few bands such as Mansun will show up on the way.

Four likely lads from Cheshire, whose slim CV lists a couple of independent singles

and a tour supporting the Charlatans, Mansun make a convincingly rowdy, 1990s pop sound on their *One* EP, the group's first release since signing to a major label at the end of last year.

With its shambling gait and ragged chorus, *Egg Shaped Fred* is easily the best of the four songs. "She'll see you in hell, I'll go shopping instead."

POP ALBUM

David Sinclair

Mansun: identity crisis

Paul Draper sings in a world-weary voice that rather suffers from his attempt to round off every syllable with a Liam Gallagher sneer.

With its preponderance of shuffly mid-tempo tunes and silly song titles — *Lemonade Secret Drinker*, *St. Jump Nose* — the EP sounds a bit samey, but if they can assert their own identity, Mansun will be a name to watch.

POP ALBUM

David Sinclair

Ocean Colour

Scene

Moseley Shoals

MCA MCD 00008***

OCEAN

Colour Scene were generally assumed to have sunk without trace after their self-titled debut album. But thanks to Chris Evans, their comeback single, *The Riverboat Song*, has become part of the fabric of modern pop life. Its insistent, hustling riff woven into his essential Channel 4 show *TFI Friday*, the Brits and, of course, the charts.

Like its predecessor, their new album is a mixture of undisguised 1960s influences — Traffic, Joe Cocker, Crosby Stills & Nash and, above all, the Beatles — stitched together with a refreshingly unself-conscious energy.

While Steve Cradock sprinkles the collection with a lively cocktail of traditional guitar riffs, singer Simon Fowler applies a tough, rangy pair of vocal cords to tunes that range from the contemplative ballad *Downstream*, to the hectic stomps of their new hit, *You've Got It Bad*.

"Get up and dance, get up and smile/Get up and drink to the days that are gone in the shortest while," he sings in *One for the Road*, and frankly, there could be no more appropriate response to this barnstorming album.

★ Worth hearing

★★ Worth considering

*** Worth buying

Three of a kind means a full house

John Allison talks

to Mstislav

Rostropovich

about Schnittke's

triple concerto

Few living musicians have done more to expand the repertory than Mstislav Rostropovich. Even though the cello is no longer the all-consuming focus of his life, on a good day he can spring surprises and the inspirational qualities of his playing still cause composers to queue up to write for him. Warm-hearted and loyal in his characteristically Russian way, as a conductor he is best known for enthusiastic performances of works by such remarkable friends as Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Britten.

One of Rostropovich's latest ventures finds him in a triple role as cellist, conductor and friend: the first recording of Schnittke's *Concerto for Three*. Indeed, it was he who first suggested to Schnittke the idea of a triple concerto for leading exponents of his music. When we met in Amsterdam after a performance of the work given with his fellow dedicatees, the violinist Gidon Kremer and violist Yuri Bashmet, Rostropovich was quick to defend a composer whose music is, by common consent, uneven. "Yes, there's a big variety in quality. But many works grow on one and need intimate knowledge. Look at the Sixth Symphony, which I've conducted; that's an absolutely genius composition, but I only really understand it now — some compositions will take a long time to reach the public."

The *Concerto for Three* is neither



Gidon Kremer, Mstislav Rostropovich and Yuri Bashmet are to release Schnittke's *Concerto for Three*

as dark nor profound as the admired *Viola Concerto* nor as facile as many pieces at the other end of the Schnittke scale. Each of the three soloists is given a technically demanding movement of his own — Rostropovich strides doggedly through his — before they combine in a fierce finale. It is a serious work, full of irony and despair, but ends with a theatrical stroke impossible to capture on record: the consternation of the audience, someone rises from his seat, ascends to the platform and brings the music to a halt with

a forearm crash on the piano. Rostropovich finds "deep, very Russian expressiveness" in it. He is also quick to point out the special significance of the title, "for three", in the Russian language: "The expression 'Na troikh' means only one thing — a vodka drinking session, in which each man traditionally drinks a third of the bottle. Schnittke found that very funny, even though he is anti-alcohol. Because of his illness he doesn't touch wine or anything. I think his health problems are an echo of his difficult life in Russia."

Though Rostropovich and his wife Galina Vishnevskaya have led a charmed life, they understand as well as anyone the realities of Soviet existence. For sheltering Solzhenitsyn they were persecuted, eased out of performances and finally deprived of citizenship after a defiant letter to the country's leading newspapers. Rostropovich wrote: "Can it really be that the times we have lived through have not taught us to take a more cautious attitude towards crushing talented people? ... I am stirring up the past not to grumble but so that in the future — say, 20

years from now — we will not be compelled to hide today's newspapers in shame." Just over 20 years later, during the coup of August 1991, he flew, without a visa, to Moscow to spend those momentous days on the streets, where he was hailed as a national hero.

Such is the strength of his attachment to Russia, and he remains outspoken on the political and musical situation there today. "Now in music it's a series of power struggles — it's chaos as each manager runs his orchestra or company according to personal taste. Take the Bolshoi — the head is a dancer, and he's very proud of the idea of marking Shostakovich's nineteenth birthday with a ballet from *Lady Macbeth*. An idiotic idea — Shostakovich wrote enough ballets himself, and this is vocal music that would lose its character if played by instruments. My nose tells me that his widow is behind it — she's interested in getting more performances. She has authority only as the widow, and that's not enough. She's not a musician. I've protested as strongly as possible. Exactly 60 years after Stalin stopped the opera at the Bolshoi, it's the theatre's duty to restore the first version."

But Rostropovich sees the current situation as a passing phase. "When the economy works, when industry is restored, people will have a better life and artists return." He has always been optimistic, sometimes naively so. "When I wrote that letter, I did not expect the government to act so hard against me. Galina warned that some accident would befall me, but I thought it would be all right — I had practically all the titles in Russia. Now, if I'm a little sad, I read the letter again and my spirits are immediately raised — I'm so proud of that letter."

● EMI's new recording of Schnittke's *Concerto for Three*, including *Concerto for Three*, is released next week.

مستقل الاصل

TRAVEL

15

BRITAIN: following in the footsteps of early Cornish missionaries plus Wordsworth country in the spring

Sheer poetry in the Lakes

I was William Wordsworth's sister Dorothy who first wrote about daffodils in her journal on April 15, 1802. "I never saw daffodils so beautiful... some rested their heads on these stones as on a pillow for weariness & the rest tossed and reeled & danced... they looked so gay ever glancing ever changing." Two years later Wordsworth wrote *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*, using Dorothy's notes. Now, almost 200 years later, visitors to the poet's beloved Lake District can enjoy a day-long circular Daffodil Tour taking in Wordsworth House at Cockermouth, where the poet was born in 1770, Dove Cottage in Ambleside, where he lived after his marriage, and nearby Rydal Mount, where he remained until his death.

The coach travels along the shores of Lake Ullswater, where William and Dorothy were seeking shelter during a walk in the pouring rain when they first saw the flowers which remain synonymous with spring. The pale, bobbing yellow heads which form a natural border to the lake are the same wild daffodils — *pseudonarcissus*, known locally as the Lent lily — which inspired Wordsworth. Discreet signs ask visitors to leave the flowers for others to enjoy, prompted by those who decide to pick a bunch or dig up the bulbs for their gardens.

When he arrived at Dove Cottage 25 years ago, the first task of George Kirkby, the head guide, was to restore the garden Wordsworth loved. As well as the *pseudonarcissus* —

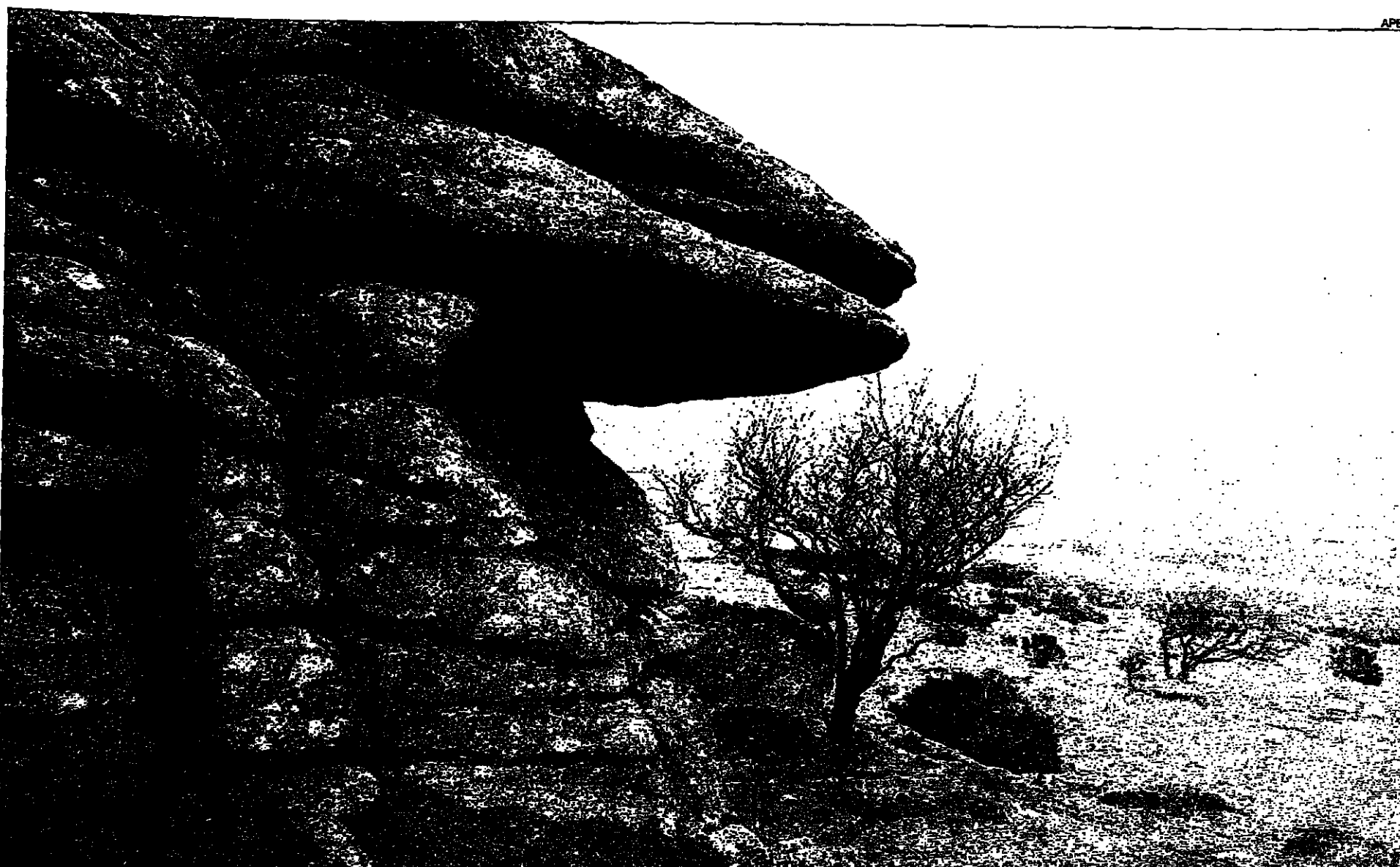
Wild *pseudonarcissus* inspired Wordsworth

any other variety which surfaces is uprooted and planted elsewhere — he has searched for seeds of the wildflowers which grew there in the early 19th century.

Rydal Mount's four acres, designed by Wordsworth, and the adjoining Dora's Field, named after the poet's daughter, glow with daffodils, replaced as summer approaches by bluebells and rhododendrons. The terraced garden of Wordsworth House at Cockermouth, a Georgian townhouse featured in his epic poem *The Prelude*, boasts a fair sprinkling of wild daffodils. Over the garden wall on the banks of the River Derwent there is a wonderful display, albeit of the modern, cultivated varieties of the yellow trumpets.

LYNNE GREENWOOD
Wordsworth day-long Daffodil Tours run from April 3-May 29. Adults £21. Children £10.50. Price includes admission to Rydal Mount, Dove Cottage & Wordsworth House. Tours begin in Keswick (017687 73662) or at Windermere (015394 45161).

Where saints went marching on



From its halfway point at the village of Lanivet, the Saints' Way rises to the awesome granite outcrop of Helman Tor. On a clear day, the view stretches 50 miles towards Dartmoor

There are more saints west of the River Tamar than in Heaven itself, so the saying goes. Through centuries, the Cornish people have perpetuated some 170 holy men and women in a mass of place names and dedications. St Austell, St Breward, St Breock... all are writ large in that gazetteer of godliness, the map of Cornwall. Sadly, in spite of 1,500 years of unbroken Celtic tradition, the lives of many of the saints remain unknown, uncelebrated, as mysterious as the Dark Ages from which they sprang. The path known as the Saints' Way is a spectacular attempt to redress matters.

Winding 26 miles across the high granite spine of the county, it links the major port of Padstow on the northern coast with the port of Fowey in the south. Inaugurated ten years ago, the Saints' Way celebrates as closely as possible the great religious journeys of the Dark Ages. From the sandy expanse of the

Camel estuary to the steep-sided Fowey River, Celtic missionaries would have walked a route broadly similar to the one now enjoyed by thousands of walkers.

The project was inspired almost by accident in the parish of Luxulyan, near St Austell. In the summer of 1984, villagers Clifford Townes and Alf Fookes were investigating public paths when they discovered, beneath the undergrowth, the remains of huge and elaborate granite stiles. They suspected that the path on which they stood might form part of an ancient, major route between the north and south coasts. Historians had long recognised the early existence of such a path across Mid-Cornwall. For Bronze Age traders, it made sense to cross Cornwall overland rather than to navigate the dangerous sea passage around Land's End. In the 6th century, the Christian missionaries came, en route to Brittany, from Ireland and Wales.

"The exact route was an

unknown quantity," says Mr Townes, "so it was a case of going to the British Museum and to local museums and archives to find out what we could." The men assembled enough evidence to conceive the idea of a Saints' Way for the walkers and pilgrims of the 20th century. At the same time, the project would provide work for job-creation programmes.

Tearms moved across Cornwall clearing undergrowth and cutting steps, along routes identified from existing rights of way. Farmers were persuaded to remove obstructions. Members of the Ramblers' Association "tested" the path and pronounced it perfect. May 1986 saw its official opening.

When people come to Cornwall, they tend to congregate on the coast," says Charlie David, North Cornwall Heritage Coast and Countryside Officer. "But this wonderful path that winds its way across the middle of Cornwall is a lovely contrast. There are superb little treasures to be found on the way."

The Saints' Way is Cornwall at its most enigmatic. Through a system of wooden marker posts, each of which bears a stylised Celtic cross, walkers are guided through a land where pagan tribes were converted to the new faith and where, according to legend, the sick were healed and dragons and serpents tamed. Forth an Syns, to give the path its Cornish name, begins appropriately at the south door of Padstow Parish Church where, in 520, St Petroc established his first monastic settlement. "Apparently Petroc arrived on a plantain leaf," says Mr David. "There may be a ring of truth in that because at one stage vegetation was used as a system of waterproofing in Irish coracles. It's certainly more plausible than the mil-

stone that St Piran is supposed to have arrived on."

Petroc, the son of a Welsh chieftain, is said to have performed many acts of kindness to animals as well as to people. Legend has it that, among other things, he rescued a stag from a hunting party, removed a splinter from a dragon's eye and released a sea monster that had become trapped in a lake. He is also supposed to have lived for a while as a hermit on an island in the Indian Ocean. What is undisputed is that he was the greatest of all the saints of Cornwall; dedications throughout the West of England, and in France and Wales survive as lasting tributes to his fame.

Although the sea was higher in the Padstow of the Dark Ages, the Camel estuary has lost none of its power to enchant. Guarded by the cliffs of Pentire and Stepper Points, it is one of Cornwall's most important havens for wading birds. Little egrets have made homes here in the past few

years. The spit of rock, Trebetherick Point, is where Petroc reputedly landed with his followers. Close by, a mound of sand known as the Doom Bar, the result of a mermaid's curse, has traditionally menaced returning ships. Yet away from the bustle of a still-flourishing port and tourist centre, the Camel estuary finds its own serenity. Even in these less saintly times, Petroc would have been at home here.

King Brychan of Wales was another of Padstow's early arrivals. Travelling with him were a dozen daughters and a dozen sons, all of whom became saints. The villages of St Endelion, St Minver, St Teath, St Mabyn and St Kev are named after his children.

Out of Padstow, the Saints' Way climbs to the blustery heights of Dennis Hill, from where the broad expanse of estuary can be seen changing shape at every fall and rise of the tide. Across enclosed fields the church of St Issey, dedicated to another of Brychan's

holy family, is picked out by the faltering mid-afternoon sun. The floor of Trebetherick Creek shines like gun metal, a lone curlew signals its presence. In Petroc's time, wolves would have prowled these deep woods of ash, oak and holly. The holy men would have taken a higher route for safety's sake.

A centuries-old green lane leads Mr David and myself to the agricultural heart of Cornwall where blackthorns are bent horizontal by the prevailing southwesterly. From No Man's Land where the Saints' Way meets the A39 Padstow-Wadebridge road, there is the distant view of an Atlantic storm brewing.

From here, Forth an Syns climbs to its highest point, St Breock Downs, 216 metres above sea level. The prehistoric long stone, Men Gurta (the Stone of Waiting) is strangely juxtaposed against the whirling turbines of a wind farm. In times past, villagers would

Fact file

□ The Saints' Way is waymarked along the whole of its 26 miles from Padstow to Fowey. For the southern section, there is an alternative route which extends the path to 35 miles. For the fit, experienced hiker, the walk takes two days. But the Saints' Way can easily be enjoyed sections at a time.

□ Restormel Borough Council has produced a free 12-page colour booklet describing a series of circular walks using the Saints' Way. It also includes advice on accommodation as well as details of parking, public transport and pubs and cafes along the route. Write to: Restormel Borough Council, Tourism and Leisure Dept, 39 Penwinick Road, St Austell, Cornwall PL25 5DR.

□ Also recommended is *The Saints' Way - Forth an Syns*, published by Cornwall County Council Countryside Access, which costs £2.50. Send cheques to Cornwall County Council Countryside Access, Transportation and Estates, Castle Canyke Road, Bodmin, Cornwall PL31 1DZ.

□ The Ordnance Survey Landranger Map 200 (Newquay and Bodmin) covers the whole route. Better still, use the Pathfinder Maps 1337, 1346, 1347 and 1354.

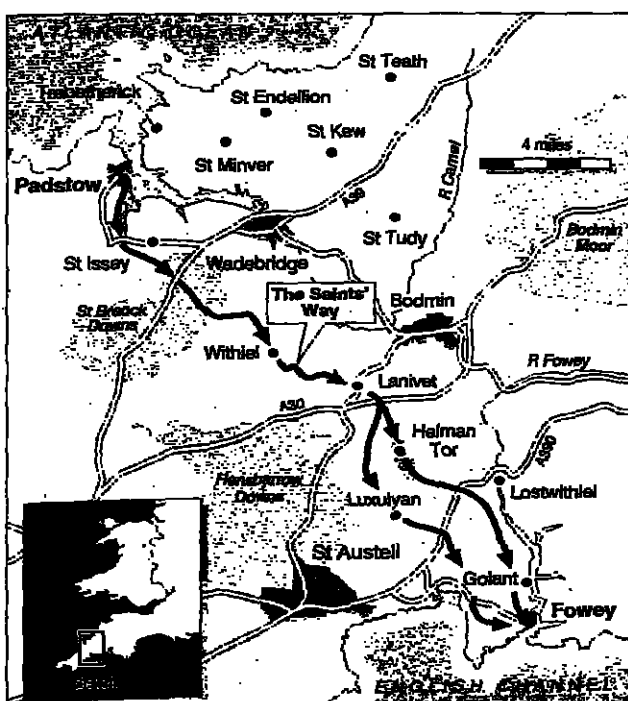
meet here to commemorate St Petroc on his feast day, June 4.

From its halfway point at the village of Lanivet, the Saints' Way rises to the awesome granite outcrop of Helman Tor. On a clear day there is a 50-mile expanse of view towards Dartmoor. Our starting point, the Camel Estuary, is far behind us. The "Cornish Alps" of the china clay industry dominate the land to the west, while to the south the Saints' Way trails away tantalisingly towards St Austell Bay and Fowey.

Near Luxulyan, as a buzzard circles overhead, Peter Bishop, a mortgage broker, is in his element. He and his wife, Heather were among the ramblers who helped to establish the path in the 1980s.

"I don't go along the Saints' Way singing hymns," says Mr Bishop. "But I do feel a sense of peace and privilege of being allowed to walk along something beautiful far from the bother of modern life."

BRIAN PEDLEY

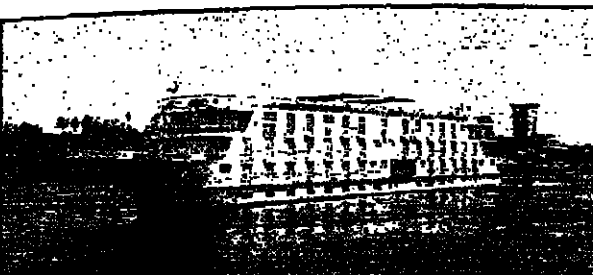
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AFRICA: across the vast Serengeti to Tanzania's lush Ngorongoro crater, and on to northern Kenya

Black rhino of the volcano

It was appropriate that my first visit to the Ngorongoro crater in Tanzania should have been on February 29: it is the sort of sight you do not expect to come upon more than once every four years.

Driving east from Serengeti into the dawn, we climbed a hill not far beyond Olduvai Gorge — and gasped at what lay below. We were at almost 8,000ft, looking 2,000ft down into an extinct volcanic crater about ten miles across and covering a total area of 123 square miles. One may have seen pictures of Ngorongoro and heard of its great size, but nothing can prepare you for the reality.

What is most striking as you

bump slowly down the steep track to the floor of the crater is the lush vegetation and the profusion of wild flowers — deep red orchids and lilies, and what looked like blue scabious. We watched a bee-eater flitting between bushes, and the swallow-like pratincole perched on a tall cactus. Buffalo graze on the grassy slopes; and at the bottom there are patches of woodland where baboons play.

On the floor of the crater, the number and variety of wildlife is breathtaking. Elephant were not hard to find, and we saw five black rhinoceros, which is about 30 per cent of their number living in the crater. The population of lion has recently been depleted due

to inbreeding, but we watched two lionesses stalking, and failing to kill, a zebra. The huge soda lake, the salt pool in the middle of the crater, is home to thousands of flamingoes, and in the several pools of fresh water hippo wallow with egrets on their backs. Elsewhere we saw highly coloured crowned cranes and a male kori bustard displaying its fluffy chest.

Masai herders and warriors (who do not kill animals for food) may also be seen in the crater. By the time we left, around midday, and began the climb up the forested track past white-flowering Cape chestnuts to the crater's rim, several minibuses from surrounding lodges could be seen below. Now that a fourth lodge is to be built nearby, it is advisable to explore the crater as early as possible in the morning.

Having come from Serengeti, we had already seen larger concentrations of wildebeest, zebra and gazelle making their way south in search of better grazing. When the rains come to Kenya, usually between late March and June, they migrate northwards. We had been due to camp in the Masawa reserve, west of Serengeti, but because of heavy rain in February the camp was moved to the edge of the Serengeti National Park, above Lake Ndutu.

Here are dried-up river beds, thin woodland which you can drive through, and the vast and seemingly limitless Serengeti plain where, apart from the big herds, we saw eland (the largest of the African antelopes), harthebeest, topi, hyena, jackal (golden and black-backed) and the occasional cheetah. Lion numbers in Serengeti have fallen by around 60 per cent over the past two years due to an outbreak of distemper, though we were lucky to see three lionesses with cubs.

Driving across the plain, sometimes without even an undulation or a bush to break the featureless landscape, I began to understand how people can suffer from agoraphobia. But if you keep going you may be rewarded with some unusual sightings. Over three days we spotted a banded fox, two types of mongoose, an aardwolf, a wild cat and, after dark, a spring hare which, with its elongated hind legs and tail, resembles a small kangaroo.

On another day we drove north across the plain to find some kopjes, outcrops of rock and scrub, where cheetah or even leopard might be seen. Having found nothing more than lappet-faced vultures guarding the kopjes, we stopped for a picnic breakfast. Our safari continued in northern Kenya, reached by light aircraft via Kilimanjaro and Nairobi. We made camp in Shaba reserve, east of Samburu, and some way north of Isiolo. The site chosen was where Joy Adamson had made her home after she left her husband George. Here she reared leopard until she was stabbed to death in 1980 by a Turkana servant whom she had dismissed.

The country is different



Ngorongoro, which covers 123 square miles, is home to a rich variety of wildlife, including the black rhino.

Safari fact file

□ The author travelled to Kenya independently. He flew to Nairobi with British Airways (0345 222111) return from £499. His safari was organised by Robin Hart Safaris (PO Box 25988, Karen, Nairobi) and booked through Bushbuck Safaris (01488 664702). The cost for one week, including all food and drink, charter flights between Serengeti and Shaba and return to Nairobi is £1,900.

□ Safaris may also be arranged through: Abercrombie & Kent (0171-730 9600), Hayes & Jarvis (0181-741 9902) and Sonak Travel (0181-423 7857).

□ The East African Wildlife Society may be contacted at PO Box 20110, Nairobi, Kenya. (Offices in Museum Hill Centre, Museum Hill Road, Nairobi.)

□ April and May is the rainy season when game is plentiful. The warmest months are December to March; the coolest, June to August. Evenings and mornings are generally cool, so pack a jumper for early starts. A hat and sunglasses are essential in the midday sun. Light clothes are suitable on safari and for informal evening wear.

□ Airport tax of US\$20 per person (about £15 or Kshs 1,320) is payable on departure from Kenya; internal domestic flights are taxed at Kshs 100 per person.

□ Abercrombie & Kent recommends membership of the Flying Doctor Society of East Africa (£10 per person for one month's holiday). Write to AMREF, 8 Bourdon Street, London W1. Your subscription will ensure an aircraft to transport you to the nearest medical centre if necessary.

□ No visas are needed to enter Kenya but you will need a full British passport (a British Visitor's passport won't do).

□ Reading: *The Flame Trees of Thika*, *The Mottled Lizard and Out in the Midday Sun*, the three volumes of *Elaph* Huxley's autobiography (Penguin, £6.99 each); *My Kenya Days* by Wilfred Thesiger (HarperCollins, £6.99).

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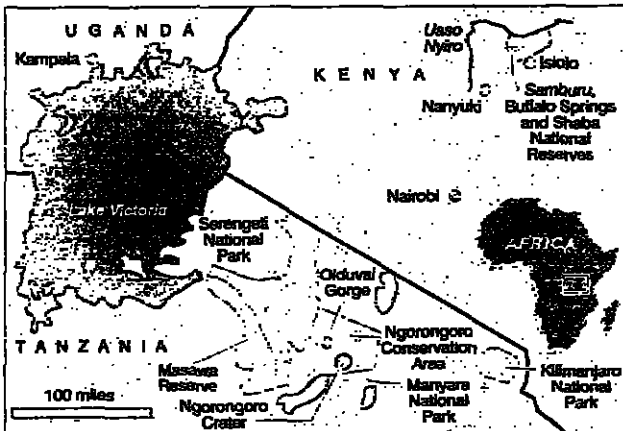
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from southern Kenya and Tanzania; there are hills everywhere and thorn bushes grow in an arid landscape often strewn with lava rocks. Then you will suddenly come upon a grove of palm trees and a watering-hole. At one spring, 50 yards from our camp, we often watched elephant.

In early March the nearby Uaso Nyiro river did not hold enough water for crocodiles, but it attracted plenty of waterbuck, plus a few Egyptian geese and yellow-billed storks. In northern Kenya you will also see animals that are not found elsewhere — notably the reticulated giraffe and Grey's zebra, with its white

underbelly and large ears. On the last day we glimpsed two unusual species of antelope, gerenuk and klipspringer, among the boulders. We were heading for the wells where nomadic Somali herdsman bring their animals. It was almost a biblical scene: the women, wrapped in colourful cloths, were surrounded by hundreds of camels, goats and cattle. The men were lifting water from the wells, forming a line from well to trough with makeshift buckets and singing as they heaved the water rhythmically up to their waiting animals.

SIMON COURTAULD

North opens up to tourists

With its vast and varied landscape, fossil deposits, diverse tribes and abundant wildlife, northern Kenya is being promoted by the country's tourism department and wildlife service as part of a campaign to alleviate the pressure of visitors in the most popular national parks, such as the Masai Mara, Amboseli and Tsavo.

The north begins east of the beacon on Mount Kenya, where the Meru national park is one of the most wild and beautiful in the country. Straddling the Equator and bisected by 13 rivers and numerous mountain-fed streams, its scenery ranges from woodlands at 3,000ft on the slopes of the Nyambeni range to wide plains with wandering river-banks dotted with dune palms.

The rivers abound with hippo and crocodile and fishing for barbus and catfish is allowed at campsites along the Tana river. More than 300 species of birds have been recorded, including the Peter's finfoot and Pel's fishing owl, as well as kingfishers, bee-eaters and weavers. Small and rare breeds of antelope do their best to avoid the large prides of lions and herds of buffalo.

Further north, the Samburu, Shaba and Buffalo Springs reserves are marked by rounded and rugged hills and undulating plains. The mix of wood and grassland with riverine forest is home to a wide variety of animal and birdlife: reticulated giraffe, Grey's zebra (bigger and more handsome than the familiar breed), elephant, oryx,

Somali ostrich, hippo and crocodile. There are sufficient bird species for visitors to spot a different one every day of the year.

The reserves are already geared for a steady flow of visitors. Samburu has three lodges with a total of 270 beds, while Shaba has one 178-bed lodge, a tented lodge and an airstrip.

Continuing north, there are the forested mountains of Marsabit, which was once joined to Samburu, Shaba and Buffalo Springs to form one huge reserve, but is now a reserve in its own right. Marsabit (meaning "mountain of cold") rises spectacularly from the middle of a desert wilderness and provides the only source of permanent surface water in the region. It has three crater lakes with abundant birdlife.

The Siboli national park, on Kenya's remote border with Ethiopia, is where an expedition led by Richard Leakey in the 1960s discovered some of the earliest traces of human-like fossils. Later, more than 160 fossil remains of early man were discovered, placing our origins to three million years ago. The locations of the most important finds are open to visitors.

With such a variety of attractions, it is small wonder that David Western, director of the Kenya Wildlife Service, predicts that northern Kenya will eventually surpass Namibia as a Mecca for discerning tourists.

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TRAVEL

17

POLAND: Paul Hoggart walks the beautiful hills and valleys around Zakopane in the Tatra mountains

Trekking up to where eagles perch

Thousands of cornflowers infuse the wheat fields with a blue-grey mist. Cut hay is draped over rows of tall, pronged staves, making grassy replicas of the lines of megaliths at Carnac in France. Villagers come to the verges of the road from Cracow to sell jars of wild berries. After the dreary south Polish plain the Podhale, the lush foothills of the Tatra mountains, are radiant and fresh.

The Tatras are the highest, most northerly cluster of the Carpathian arch as it sweeps from the edge of Austria to the Ukraine. Straddling the Slovak border, the peaks of the central ridge are the highest in Poland. They are stunningly beautiful, with an alpine grandeur, despite their relatively modest height (up to 8,167ft). The Poles adore them and come in hordes, to ski in winter, to hike and climb in summer. In high season, the summits can get as crowded as London's Eros in August.

Huddled under the mountains is the busy little resort of Zakopane — once a tiny village, now a mushroom field of campsites and wooden holiday villas. The centre is a hotch-potch of restaurants, museums, climbing shops and souvenir stalls.

The mountains were "discovered" in the 19th century by Poland's artistic intelligentsia. Under Austrian rule Zakopane became the focus of an art-crafty revival of rustic architecture and an epicentre of folkloric nationalism.

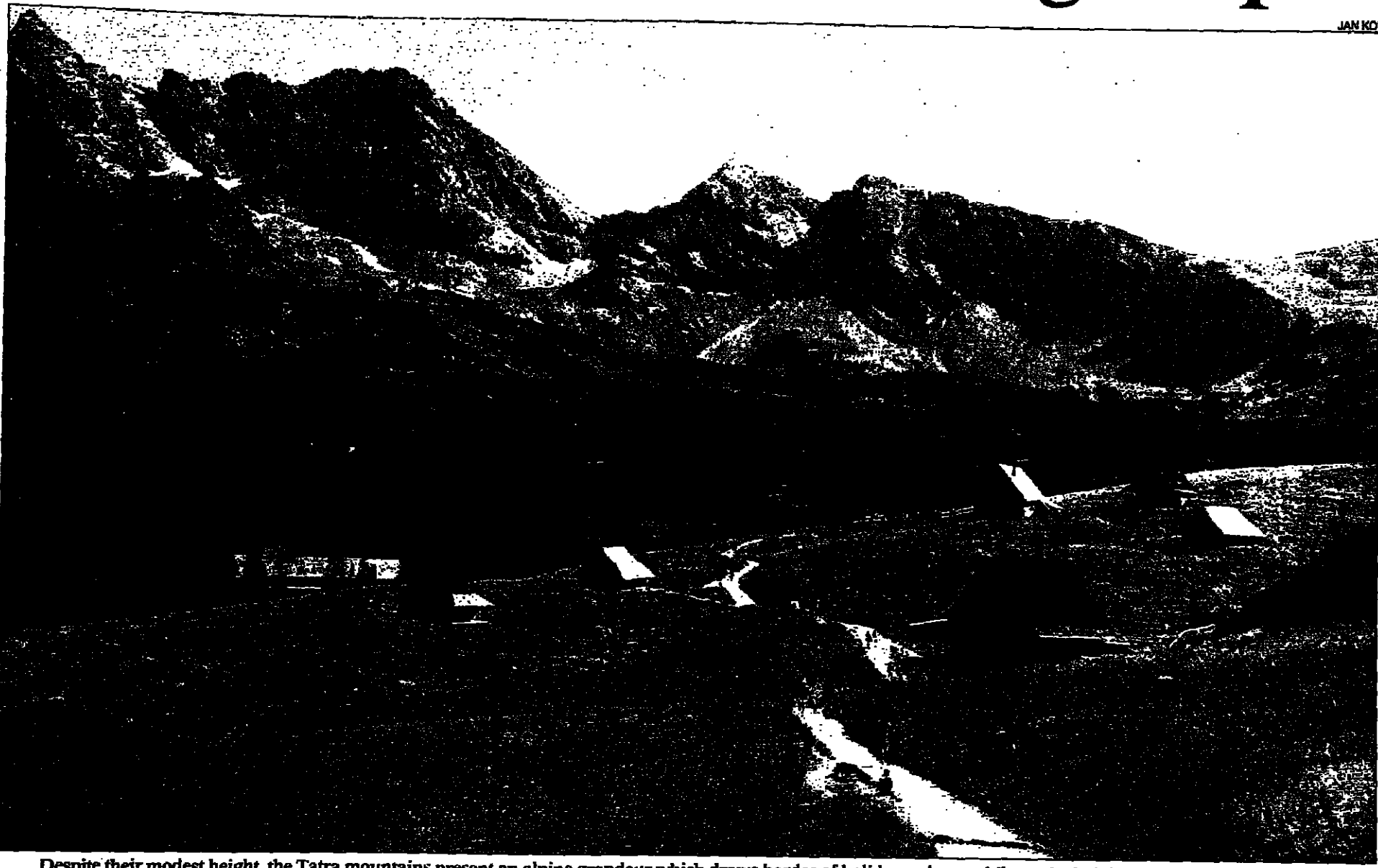
As the resort swelled it sprouted "traditional" wooden buildings, many designed by Stanislaw Witkiewicz, inventor of the "Zakopane style". This spiced the local log architecture with a pinch of Art Nouveau. Several of the grander villas can be visited, but the chapel at Jaszczyrówka is the most elaborate example. With its steep, roof and gables in complex layers and decorative carving throughout, it is ornate to the point of fussiness, but delightful none the less.

Little remains of the original village except the old parish church, also wooden but much simpler. Black outside, warm mid-tones within, it has a satisfying chunky charm. In the tiny graveyard strange, upright logs with naive religious carvings and topped with little roofs — half totem poles, half nesting boxes — serve as headstones.

Zakopane is lined with stalls selling raw wool pullovers, wooden knick-knacks and brintza, the local smoked sheep's milk cheeses. The shape and colour of rugby balls and almost as rubbery, they are sharp and salty.

The sprawling market offers minute wild strawberries and blueberries at about 60p a cup. Ukrainian traders flog anything from the back of a former Soviet army lorry: roccoo retirement watches, compasses and KGB-surplus spectacles with sinister mini-binoculars protruding from the frames.

At night the crowds amble the steep high street. Gipsy bands tout for the restaurant trade. Euro-buskers mangle transatlantic "garden urdies" to passers-by. It's all very



Despite their modest height, the Tatra mountains present an alpine grandeur which draws hordes of holidaymakers to hike and climb in summer and ski in winter

ingly difficult sections, before turning north away from Rysy, along a spectacular ridge called the "Eagles' Perch". Pressed for time, we took a steep path down from Swinica to another idyllic, trout-filled lake. Here we were (justly) harangued by a truck-shaped matron when my friend threw crumbs to the fish against reserve regulations.

The track meandered through alpine pastures, dotted with wooden huts before dropping dramatically across a ridge into Kuźnice.

Apart from the delights of the landscape, southern Poland is generally extremely cheap and preserves an engagingly dated raffishness. The driver of our bus from Cracow (£2 each return) sported a grandiose comic-opera moustache, while a fellow passenger, the spitting image of Harry Enfield's "Old Girl", whipped out a black and silver cigarette holder and smoked with the poise of a Noël Coward lounge lizard.

Zakopane is full of cheap restaurants, selling hearty dishes such as potato pancakes with goulash. At the costly rustic Obrochówka, a modest portion of roast duck costs about £1, and a three-course meal with good local beer £4.

Most routes to the Tatra come through the superb city of Cracow. You can eat at the Wierzynek, possibly the best restaurant in the country, for under £20 a head. We had an excellent meal of traditional dishes (poached carp in jelly, herring in cream sauce, venison filets) in the room where Spielberg ate when filming *Schindler's List*.

The area remains engagingly unsophisticated, but in the cheaper hotels you have at least a 50 per cent chance of finding a bath plug. Given the glories of the mountains and, for that matter, Cracow, who's complaining.

How to get to the Zakopane region and where to stay

□ The author flew to Cracow as a guest of LOT Polish Airlines, 315 Regent Street, London W1 (0171-580 5037).

□ Flights from London (Heathrow 2) to Cracow before June 15 are on Wednesdays and Saturdays, departing at 17.30 and arriving in Cracow at 20.50. Return flights, Wednesdays and Saturdays, depart Cracow at 14.55, arriving Heathrow 16.30. Fare: £225 return, plus about £15 in airport taxes. From June 15, flights are on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, at the same times as above; £255 plus taxes.

□ Flights reach Cracow after the last buses have left for Zakopane. The 24-hour taxi ride costs about £50 each way. During the day, buses leave every hour for Zakopane at under £10 return.

□ Polorbis (Polish travel agency), 82 Mortimer Street,



London W1 (0171-636 2217), offers return flights plus seven nights half-board (see menu) in the Hotel Kasprowy. Zakopane for £350 per person sharing a twin room until May 15 (£345 after that date), plus the cost of the transfer from Cracow to Zakopane. The Kasprowy offers a free shuttle service from the hotel

to Zakopane bus station, from which buses leave frequently for all the main beauty spots in the area.

□ Car hire (available through Polorbis) is about £238 a week for a Renault Clio, with unlimited mileage, plus £13 a day insurance.

□ Bed and breakfast accommodation with Polish families offers excellent value, with prices from about £10 per person per night. There is an agency, TPT Tatry (Zakopane 4000) on the corner of ul Kosciuszki and Al 3 Maja.

□ Details of walks in the region are included in Tim Burford's *Hiking Guide to Poland and the Ukraine* (Bradt Publications, £11.99). PPWK (Polish Ordnance Survey) maps are available locally, including an excellent 1:30,000 walking map of the national park.

pond"), higher, smaller and even more beautiful, the crowds melt away. As I climbed on past the first big wedge of permanent snow they had all but gone, leaving me to not-quite-solitary communion with the landscape.

Rysy, at 8,167ft, is the highest and most imposing peak in Poland (there are a few higher in Slovakia). It's a prime target for hillwalkers — Lenin is said to have climbed it — but it is demanding, with fixed chains in places, and requires an early start.

A side path below Morskie Oko takes you to the high valley of the Five Polish Lakes, where there is a log hut with sleeping accommodation and a restaurant. Deep in the nature reserve, this beautiful valley probably offers the purest Tatra country. Bears, wolves, lynxes, wildcats and chamois survive in the wilderness around.

Paths swarmed with parties of little youngsters, in simple, unfussy clothes, like pre-1960s youth hostellers. They greet you with a chirpy "Czes", Polish for "Hi". This is pronounced "Tschetchuk", so the hills are alive with the sound of sneezing.

The Polish attitude to mountains can seem cavalier, going on suicidal. Anyone and everyone attacks the peaks, walking up in thin trainers, sandals, even flip-flops. We saw men in T-shirts heading for the summit of Rysy as dusk closed in — no winnypish woolies for them, let alone whistles or bivvy bags. On Giewont, a friend saw nuns climbing the chains in their habits, while small children were passed up and down difficult sections like luggage on a train.

The quickest way up the main ridge is by the Kuźnice cable car. Polish holiday-makers queue for hours to get on, although you can pre-book places in the Orbis office (state travel agency) in Zakopane the day before.

The views on the ridge are, of course, wonderful. To the north, the southern Polish plain stretches beyond the foothills, disappearing in a polluted brownish haze somewhere near Cracow. To the south, the prospect of Slovakia is mouthwatering: deep-green valleys in ever receding folds

between the jagged ranks of dark peaks, some glistening with snow. A rusty, uprooted sign marks the border on a side path, a reminder that it is still illegal to cross here.

We struck east towards Swinica (7,547ft), the first real peak in our path. Here again

there are fixed chains as you near the top, some to cross steep slopes over steeper drops. The bare rock summit was, inevitably, covered with cheery hay-fever victims and I had difficulty finding a perch. From Swinica the walk follows the border, with increas-

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Answers from page 23

TREFA

(a) Flesh meat forbidden to be eaten by Jews because the animal has not been slaughtered in the manner prescribed by the Law. From the Hebrew word "that which is torn", ie flesh of an animal torn (or pounced upon fatally) by a wild beast. "Trefa" in a broader sense includes a regularly but unskillfully killed animal, in contradistinction to Nebelah.

TATTIE BOGLE

(b) Scottish rural slang for a scarecrow, a bogle or frightener who keeps watch over the tattie (potato) field. Your latest excursion to the Dead Men's Department in Oxford has outfitted you as the best-dressed tattie bogle in the office, Philip.

SYSSITIA

(a) Meals eaten together in public. The custom of eating the chief meal of the day at a public mess, as practised in Sparta and Crete. From the Greek *syssin* together + *siros* grub. "Necessity and the waiter drive them all to a sepulchral syssition."

STATANT

(b) In Heraldry, of an animal, especially a lion, standing in profile with all four feet on the ground. Irregularly formed from *stat*, the participle stem of Latin *stare* to stand. The regular formation would be *standing* or *static*, but Heraldry loves the irregular. "A Lion Statant, having his Tail extended in a right line, is the Crest of the Duke of Northumberland."

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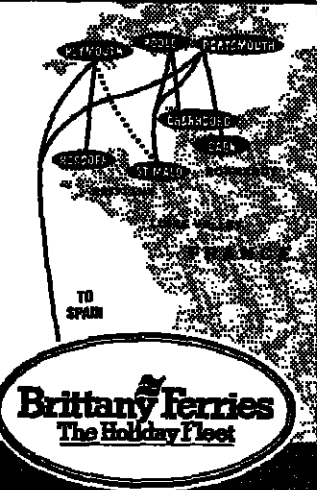
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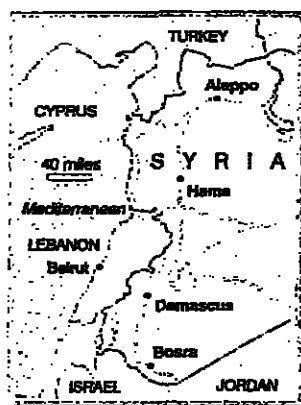


FARE CONDITIONS - All travel to France to be completed by 30 April 1996. Special fares subject to availability, not available in conjunction with any other offer, promotion, discount or tour operator's tariff. Standard booking conditions as shown in current brochures also apply. Payment required on booking. Special fares can be used in conjunction with inclusive holidays, where ferry travel is priced separately. £10 per car supplement for Friday night departures to France. Brittany Ferries reserve the right to alter, vary or withdraw any special fare on offer at any time. No refunds. £10 alteration fee. Other special conditions apply. Please enquire.

SYRIA AND JORDAN: exploring the past of two countries that have changed little since biblical times

Pilgrims galore but little progress

We entered the ruined city of Bosra through the western Wind Gate, treading the Roman cobbles. Initially it seemed a sombre place, all black and grey basalt, and we were taken aback at the squalor. Local people live among the fallen splendours, leaning their flimsy dwellings against crumbling columns; telephone cables extend from a third-century triumphal arch. An underground warehouse drips with stagnant water. Donkeys hobble around.

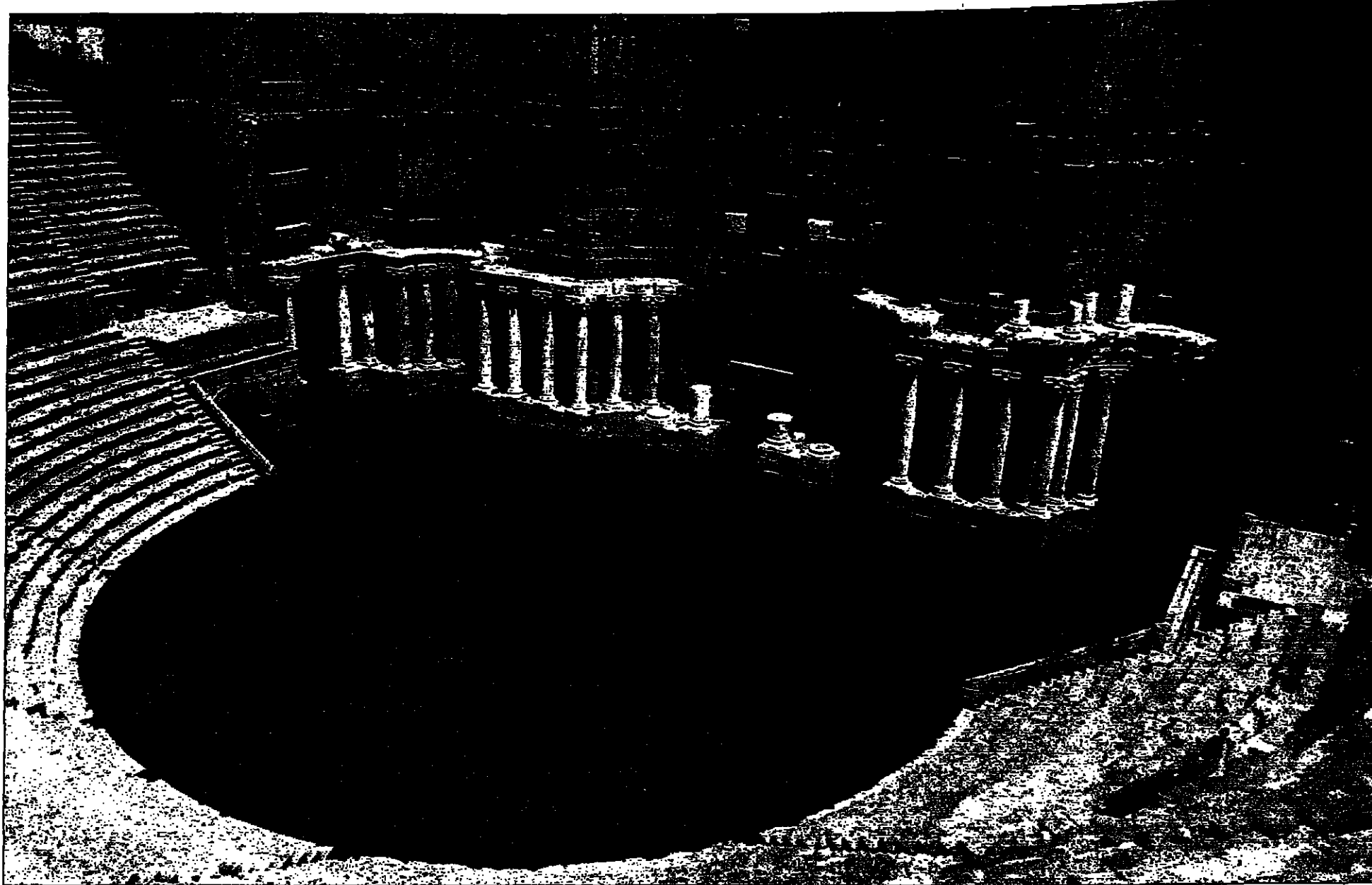


Throughout the 1st century AD, Bosra was the northern capital of the Nabateans, those bandit-turned-taxmen whose southern capital was Petra. It stood at the intersection of various caravan routes. The Romans overtook the city in 106 AD, garrisoning the Third Legion there. Later, the Prophet Muhammad took instruction from the Nestorian monk Bahira at Bosra and, for centuries afterwards, pilgrims stopped there on their way to Mecca.

The Syrian Government plans to rehouse the squatters and restore the site. In some ways that would be a pity, for they give the ruins a surreal dimension. The most surprising building is the citadel, which stands outside the main site. What seems at first to be a medieval Saracen fortress turns out to enclose a huge 2nd-century amphitheatre, one of the best preserved Roman buildings in the world. The stage has a permanent set composed of Corinthian columns. The amphitheatre is a popular picnic site and, on Fridays, full of merry-makers.

Every armchair traveller has exotic preconceptions of Damascus — and it lives up to most of them. I was particularly charmed by the Azem Palace (Dar al-Azem), the 18th-century Ottoman mansion of Assad Pasha Azem, the governor of the city. Courtyards with tiled floors, fountains and orange trees, high-ceilinged, paneled rooms, everything luxuriously lacquered and inlaid. It was like a restrained version of Cardiff Castle. One room featured a cabinet of curiosities, including three lines of poetry written (with a cat's whisker) on a grain of wheat and an eggshell covered with Koranic verses.

The vast, carpeted prayer hall of the Omayyad Mosque is serene, with worshippers sitting in contemplation or chatting quietly. To the side of the main chamber is a smaller one where things are not so placid: black-clad women grieve noisily for Hussein, the son of Ali, slain at the battle of Karbala in the Middle Ages. The weeping and wailing has lasted 13 centuries. As in all of Syria, the passing of time is



The huge amphitheatre in Bosra, shown here flooded, is one of the best preserved Roman buildings in the world. It is a popular site for picnickers and merry-makers

irrelevant. This has been a place of worship for nearly three millennia. The ancient Arameans built a temple here to Hadad (the god of thunder and lightning) in the 9th century BC. In turn, it became a Roman temple for Jupiter and the Cathedral of St John the Baptist. In 708 the sixth Omayyad caliph, al-Walid, decided to build a great mosque to establish Damascus as the political and cultural centre of the Islamic world; he destroyed the cathedral and used its stones for the mosque, which took seven years to build. There are three minarets, the tallest being the Tower of Jesus (Madhanat Issa). It is widely believed that Jesus will one day descend from this tower to fight the Antichrist.

The Old Town is composed of winding streets and houses with bay windows that sometimes touch the windows of the houses opposite. I watched some bakers using a clay oven. The souk, with its perfumers and spice vendors, is worth visiting, although it is not as remarkable as the huge, labyrinthine one at Aleppo.

President Assad's face is everywhere: on walls, windows, moving traffic. Near our hotel, his portrait on a banner

□ The author was a guest of Insight Tours (0181-332 2900), which offers a 12-day escorted coach tour through Jordan and Syria, flying into Amman with Royal Jordanian Airlines (0171-734 2557). Prices, including flights, accommodation and most meals, start from £1,299.

□ If you prefer to visit Syria independently, the following airlines fly to Damascus: Syrian Arab Airlines (0171-493 2851), British Airways (0345 222111), Austrian Airlines (0171-434 7300), British Mediterranean (0171-493 3030), KLM (0181-750 9000), Air France (0181-742 6600), Egypt Air (0171-734 2395).

Fact file

□ Jasmin Tours (01628 531121) offers a very attractive long weekend in Damascus, "Arabian Freelance", from £441, including flights and accommodation.

□ The best time to travel to Syria is from April to October, avoiding the cold and often wet Syrian winter.

□ The author stayed at five-star Cham Palace hotels in Bosra, Damascus, Hama, Palmyra and Aleppo. There are plenty of cheaper alternatives listed in the *Travel Survival Kit for Jordan and Syria* (Lonely Planet, £9.95). One of the

best restaurants in Damascus is Alf-Layleh-Wa-Layleh (1001 Nights), which is in the old town. Any hotel reception would be able to direct you there.

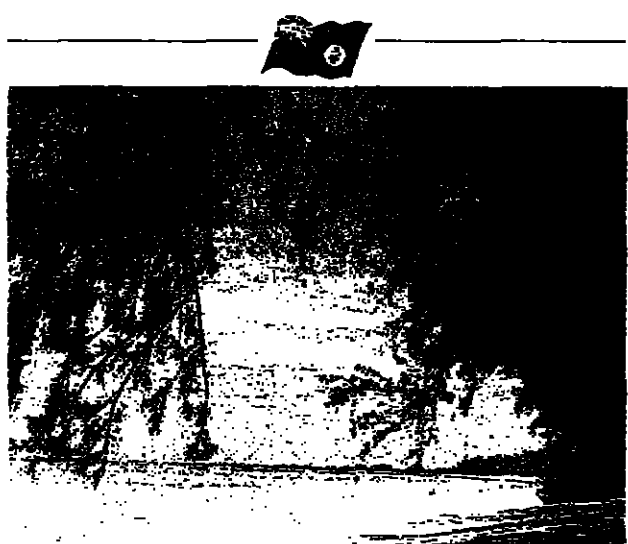
□ There is no Syrian Tourist Board in London. Some tourist information might be available from the Syrian Embassy, 8 Belgrave Square, London SW1 (0171-245 9012). It is necessary to obtain a visa from the embassy.

□ Reading: *Syria Revealed* by Anthony King (Boxer Revelation Guides, £12.99), *Syria: A History and Architectural Guide* by W Ball (Scorpion, £14.95), *Monuments of Syria* by Ross Burns (I.B. Tauris, hardback £49.50, softback £18.95).

do drawings, some are much the same age. The norias no longer function but still turn when the river is high enough, emitting (I am told) a groaning noise. Old people say the wheels speak. They were silent that evening, the river no more than a shallow pool. As I crossed the river, the calls to prayer trailed off. Downtown it was busy but hushed: people were speaking quietly, trying on shoes. Arab pop seeped from the doorway of a music shop. There were building sites all over the place, possibly the aftermath of 1982 when the Muslim Brotherhood was quashed: government tanks rolled into Hama, bombs were dropped. Several thousand people were killed and countless buildings, including the Grand Mosque, destroyed.

People were buying blankets and quilted coats. One dusty shop featured stuffed birds (a pelican, an eagle, some chickens and an owl) wearing necklaces of semiprecious stones. There was no assistant. Was it a jeweller or a taxidermist? I left quickly and followed my nose to a shop where coffee was roasted, and bought a kilo bag, still warm and pungent with cardamom.

JOE ROBERTS



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Lost in the shadowy desert mountains

Sabbah, the Beduin guide and occasional taxi-driver, dropped us off at the foot of the mountain. As he clambered back into the battered 4x4, he casually called out, "Climb climb. Fire tea", before speeding off into the desert.

We later discovered that there was to be plenty of climbing that day as we followed an ancient route up Burdah mountain in Jordan's Wadi Rum, but sadly no tea.

Underestimating the effect the 40C heat would have on us as we scrambled up the rock face, we only just made it to the top as evening fell.

Climbing down, the fading light played tricks with the pitted stone, turning the path into a shadowy maze. Eventually we had to admit we were lost: lost with no water, a few dry biscuits and no protection against the bitter desert night. But our little adventure was hardly unique. Later we were told of other climbers spending freezing nights on small ledges, helicopter rescues and the really desperate having to drink urine to survive.

Wadi Rum is a desert area that is dominated by huge dome-topped sandstone mountains known as Jebels. As you turn off the smooth King's Highway, (one of the world's oldest trade routes), and begin to bump along the road into this arid kingdom, rust-coloured walls rise up on either side of the desert floor. These get bigger and bigger until you reach the tiny settlement of Rum. This motley collection of breeze-block dwellings and tents, dominated by the towering walls around, is the home to the semi-nomadic Howait Beduin tribe.

Lawrence of Arabia was one of the first people to visit the area and

record what he saw as he roamed around the region during the 1917 Arab Revolt. Lawrence observed in his book *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*: "We looked up to the left to a long wall of rock, sheering in like a 1,000ft wave towards the middle of the valley. Our little caravan grew self-conscious, and fell dead quiet, afraid and ashamed to flaunt its smallness in the presence of the stupendous hills." Since being immortalised in the David Lean film *Lawrence of Arabia*, a steady number of visitors has been coming to Wadi Rum to marvel at the desolate landscape, which turns a deep blood-red at sunset. Trips are usually one-day affairs tucked on to visits to the ancient city of Petra, a 90-minute drive away. As part of the Lawrence experience, you can eat and dance in a Beduin tent or don a keffiyeh (Arab head-gear) and ride a camel to the roman-

tic-sounding Lawrence's well — which unfortunately turns out to be little more than a muddy pool. But, to rock climbers and walkers of the adventurous persuasion, Wadi Rum offers a lot more. Until the early 1980s these pursuits were almost unheard of but, in 1984, the Jordanian Government invited a party of British climbers to assess the area. A few years later, a guide book appeared and word began to spread. Now, as mountaineers look further afield to practise their sport, Wadi Rum is "in vogue". There are vast tracts of unexplored rock as well as treks to places that few apart from the Beduin have visited.

As part of a hunting trip, in search of rare herbs or as a quick and shady way through the mountains, the Beduin have developed detailed path-



Hiking in the Wadi Rum

ways. Take Sheikh Hamdan's Route for example, the easiest route up Jebel Rum (1,745 metres), the highest point in the area.

Unless you feel up to a 15km walk across the desert you must find a Bedu to take you across to the mountain base and there is no haggling over the fare. It costs 30 Dinars (£30) for an exhilarating if bone-shaking drive across the sands.

The route itself seems to end abruptly at a blank wall. In fact, it ingeniously follows cairns and small arrows that lead up the steep-sided slabs of the gorge.

Getting there

□ The author travelled independently and his 14-day trip cost about £350, with flights.

□ Explore Worldwide (01252 344161) offers a ten-day Lawrence of Arabia tour, with two nights' camping at Wadi Rum, for £890, including flights, tax and visits to Petra and Amman.

□ Elias Thomson (0171-707 9000) offers a week's self-catering at the Aparthotel Riviera from £803 for two sharing, or flight and £88 for £349.

□ Agabus: Jasmin Tours (01628 531121) offers seven-day, full-board holidays at the Coral Beach hotel from £580 per person, including flights and tax.

□ Accommodation: the Wadi Rum Guest House charges about £2 to sleep on the roof. Rooms in the village cost about the same.

□ When to go: spring, with longer hours of daylight, is best. In summer, temperatures reach about 40C and in late autumn there can be flash floods.

□ Reading: *Jordan and Syria* (Lonely Planet, £8.95), *Treks and Climbs in the Mountains of Wadi Rum* by Tony Howard (Cicerone Press, £12.99), *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* by T.E. Lawrence (Penguin, £8.95).

Eventually you make it to the top. It is almost totally silent apart from snatches of Muslim prayer calls and camel screeches carried on the wind.

There are scores of similar routes in the area. All you require is some mountain knowledge, a head for heights and some basic rock craft.

When exploring, you are constantly thinking about water. Two litres a day is reckoned to be the minimum, although when trekking through the desert it is easy to sink a lot more. If you are lucky you may find a spot where water seeps out of the rocks, a refreshing change to the warm

plastic bottle variety. A more promising option is to stock up in Rum. Water is available from wells but the manager of the Government-run rest house claims that this is unfit to drink. Maybe, although it could be a ploy to get you to buy his over-priced "no calories" water (80p). Cheaper bottled water is available, as well as basic foodstuffs and ice cream.

Rum itself was originally a semi-permanent camp, but over the past few years the black goat-hair tents have been replaced by buildings. These, along with the battered vehicles and dirt tracks, seem at odds with the grand surroundings. However, its charms as a desert outpost, centred around a small *Beau Geste*-style fort, soon begin to grow on travellers.

Travel literature states that there is nowhere to stay, but the resthouse has space on the roof — they provide a blanket and a mattress. Villagers are also beginning to offer rooms.

With the opening of the Israeli border at Eilat, and the Jordanian Government's investment in tourism, more people are likely to venture into the area. At cooler times of the year, such as Christmas, the place can be full of climbers and walkers.

The Beduin do make a living from tourism by acting as guides and ferrying visitors around by camel and jeep. But plans to build a tourist hotel have been resisted and it is hard to see how this self-sufficient group would ever let their way of life be manipulated or destroyed by the tourism industry.

Luckily, for the present, there is good money to be made from rescuing stranded climbers. After an uncomfortable night under the stars, we stumbled down the mountain at dawn to be met by a bemused Sabbah. A few hours later, relaxing in his cool house, there was still no tea, but instead there were cups of sweet, cardamom-flavoured coffee.

RICHARD NELSSON

ساحل الامارات

TRAVEL

19

Clue up to see the world

TAXI
FOLLOWING complaints against aggressive cowboy taxi drivers, the Port Authority of New York has announced a fine rate of \$30 (about £20) for the 16-mile journey from JFK airport to Manhattan. Brave souls can limit the tip to 10 per cent.

Complaints about taxi charges from London Heathrow are as frequent but less effective: the average charge for the 16-mile drive to the West End is about £33 — much more if there are delays.

LE B&B
THE 1996 edition of *Le B&B* guide (£5.50 from bookshops, or by calling 01491 578803) lists more than 600 inspected places throughout France where B&B charges start at 100F (£13.50) for two per night. Not surprisingly with the franc fort, economical accommodation guides proliferate: *The Chambres d'Hôtes* costs £12 plus £1.65 p&p from Gites de France, 178 Piccadilly, London W1V 0D13 and lists 6,600 places from £150 for two including breakfast, while the posh *Chambres d'Hôtes de Prestige* (£12 or +0p from the same address) lists 500 châteaux and manors, some with swimming pools, at around 380F (about £50) for two.

ITALIAN COLLECTION
TINY, intimate pensions — the six-bedroom birthplace of Dante's wife for example, in Florence (£35 per person per night), a 15th-century country house outside Urbino (£39), an inn on seclusive Lake Orta (£17) — are all featured in the comprehensive holiday pro-

Jill Crawshaw
with an update
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gramme from the Italian Connection (0171-486 6990), formerly VIGB Travel.

More than 500 self-catering properties include off-the-package-beat destinations such as the Aeolian Islands where two people sharing pay between £249-£453 per apartment in Lipari.

LONG-HAUL VALUE
WITH an expected 20 per cent rise in the cost of aviation fuel later this year, are we coming to the end of the long-haul bargains?

Meanwhile, Kuoni's Limited Editions (01306 740500) offer savings of up to £800 on holidays to the end of June.

A week in Mombasa during May starts at £459 half board, though the average of 13in monthly rainfall could dampen enthusiasm. A week's half board in the Maldives (7in rainfall) costs £539, while the traditionally expensive Mauritius (4in) costs £755. There are similar reductions in Thailand, Jamaica, Malaysia, Bali and Barbados.

FROM CEZANNE TO CHOUROUTE
THEMED routes provide motorists to France with excuses

to meander off the beaten track on voyages of discovery. France Information (0891 244123) will send out free maps, notes and details on subjects that include "In the footsteps of the Painters of Light in Provence" and "La Route Jacques-Cœur" in the Loire Valley, while the Alsace brochure lists the more worldly pleasures of wine, trout, fried carp and... choucroute. Other themed route information is available locally.

FERRY TO THE ISLES
EXPERIENCING Greek life away from the tourist resorts, is the aim of Explore Worldwide's (01252 319448) 16-day Greek Wanderer holiday. Using local ferries, the escorted tour visits Syros, Paros, Naxos, Ios and Santorini, with walks through the countryside and visits to caves and remote beaches. Accommodation is in family-run hotels and tavernas. Price £675 including flights and B&B.

CAMPING CUTS
SUBSTANTIAL cuts have been made by French Country Camping (01923 261311) on all its seven-night camping holidays. Staying at Honfleur in early June for up to six people has been reduced from £369 to £299 in a tent, from £509 to £429 in a mobile home, including the crossings between Portsmouth and Le Havre.

BALLYKISSANGEL COUNTRY
WITH Irish tourism 18 per cent up on last year, and Dublin a top city seller among the trendy young, the chocolate-box charms of the BBC television series *Ballykissangel* are doing a grand selling job for its countryside.

Cresta Holidays (0990 561814) is offering two nights self-drive in Co Wicklow, Ballykissangel country, from £125 including the ferry. Weekends to Cork with two nights' B&B and flights cost £216, while during April, you get four nights' B&B in Limerick for the price of three — £186 including flights.

WILDLIFE WATCHING
ORNITHOLOGIST Andy Jones is leading a two-centre birdwatching tour to Iceland in May, when puffins, gannets



See puffins in Iceland

and hopefully Harlequin Ducks and Barrow's Golden Eye can be spotted. The price of £893 covers flights, all meals, accommodation and excursions, from Discover the World (01737 218800).

THEME FEVER
ACCORDING to Keith Prowse ticket agents, more than 12 million Britons visit major theme parks each year in this country and abroad. The most popular was Disney in Florida, followed by EuroDisney in Paris.

The latest theme park, Legoland Windsor, which opened last week, expects to receive 1.4 million visitors annually.

How easy is it to get information when you ring a tourist office?



A statue of Buddha in Ladakh, India. The author was promised an information pack on Kerala. More than two weeks later he is still waiting for it

Hanging on the telephone

GOVERNMENTS often regard tourist offices as expensive luxuries. Some use them to provide plum overseas postings as political rewards. One of their key roles is to provide information about everything from hotels to long-distance footpaths. How well do they perform? At first glance, premium-rate telephone numbers (49p per minute peak/39p off-peak) may seem a breathtaking cheek. Why should holidaymakers be charged to inquire about what is, after all, essentially promotional material? Experience suggests, however, that the 0891 numbers have relieved pressure on overwhelmed switchboards — and saved callers the frustration of the perpetual engaged tone. Posing as a consumer, I contacted 11 London tourist offices. This is how they responded.

France (0891 244123)

I was aware of complaints that inquirers had been unable to get through until a premium-rate call system was installed — but was surprised that a real person answered within 20 seconds, and warned me how much the call was costing. Could I please have some information on the Vosges? Certainly — did I need accommodation details too? I did. The process took less than a minute. Copious information on the region arrives within five working days, including a coupon to request further details of hotels, gîtes, campsites and other special interests, such as walking.

Spain (0891 669920)

Tried the normal-rate telephone number (0171-499 0901) but a recorded message advised that, while I could hold on and make an individual inquiry, I could not ask for written material. Called the premium-rate number. Recorded voice answered instantly but took at least two minutes to spell out a long list of information available including lists of tour operators and self-catering accommodation — and to explain that I was paying extra so that the tourist office could improve its service. I should wait about ten days for the information to arrive. The call took about two-and-a-half minutes; a good minute longer than was necessary. In fact, a single booklet arrived after five

working days. This provides a good basic guide to the region, but information on hotels is limited to state-run *paradores*.

Italy (0171-408 1254)

After one and a half minutes a recorded message advises of yet another 0891 brochure line and gives what I take to be a warning that the office cannot send out literature and suggests I could fax any urgent inquiry. I dial one for an operator and a charming Italian lady says "no problem". Of course she'll send me information on Apulia. This has probably taken about four minutes but my call has been handled brilliantly. A massive pack arrives in two working days but, while it includes details of spas, mountain holidays, package tour operators and a fat museum guide, the information is general rather than specific.

United States

I call the US Embassy in London where a switchboard operator informs me that there is no longer any tourist office in Britain. "I can only advise you to go to your local bookstore, travel agent or library," she says. But don't individual states have representation here? "No, zero, zilch," she says. The embassy should ensure its staff are better informed. Most individual states are represented in Britain and a good travel agent ought to be able to give you contact numbers. I call the

consumer number for Mississippi, which doubles for Tennessee. I'm through within seconds and an information pack arrives three days later. It gives basic information on places to see and a hotels list.

Australia (0990 561434)

Telephone picked up almost immediately. No premium rate charged. I ask for information on Western Australia — including details of accommodation, car and campervan rental. He asks if I have seen the Australian Tourist Commission's main travel guide. No I haven't. OK — that'll probably take about five working days to arrive. It does — and it's excellent.

India (0171-437 3677)

The first number in the telephone directory (above) is constantly engaged. I eventually get through to the 24-hour information line. I ask for information on Kerala, am promised a pack and asked if I object if my name and address are passed to "other reputable organisations". I do. More than a fortnight has passed and nothing has arrived. And now a recorded message on the information line tells me I have dialled the wrong number, but doesn't tell me the right one.

Greece (0171-734 5997)

A simple touch-tone process allows me to record name, address and request for information on the spectacular monasteries of Meteora and on the Peloponnese. This takes about two minutes at normal local-call rates. Relevant booklets, which contain maps, potter histories and some hotel details, arrive after five days.

Canada (0891 715000)

Tourist office comes under the High Commission in the directory which duplicates

the information in French. Canada has also switched to a premium rate number but, if "travel counsellors" are busy, you use touch tone to leave a message. I ask for a run-down on Ontario's provincial parks. A brochure containing general information on Canada, with hardly any reference to parks, arrives after ten working days. However, the envelope includes a form that I can use to request more specific details: £2.50 for up to five brochures, £3.50 for more.

South Africa (0181-944 6646)

Normal call rate. Answerphone message says information could take seven to ten days to reach me because of "unprecedented demand". I ask for an information pack on Cape Town and the Wine Route. Excellent brochures arrive after two weeks. But hotel prices would have been useful.

Sweden (01476 78811)

Dial number in London directory. Recorded message refers me to another number. Second recorded message asks for name, address and request. I ask for details of campsites in Sweden — with maps. As you might expect, a comprehensive guide arrives within four days, including detailed maps.

Turkey (0171-629 7771)

Two numbers in the directory. Call the first one to be told the information line is the second listed. Nothing in the directory indicates this. Second number engaged for long periods. After a week of sporadic efforts I get through quickly and ask for details of Istanbul hotels. These arrive after two days, but the hotel list does not include prices.

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BLACK

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BOURNEMOUTH

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MANY ATTRACTIVE

ladies, 35-40 years, Tel:
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BUBBLY

lady, 35-40 years, Tel:
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COUNTY

lady, 35-40 years, Tel:
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MEN

lady, 35-40 years, Tel:
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DELECTABLE

lady, 35-40 years, Tel:
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DISCOVERING

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FINDING

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HAPPY

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HEARTS & FEELS

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THE TIMES

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LADIES

TRADITIONAL

Values are
important in this lady.
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TWO

ladies, 35-40 years, Tel:
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WIRRAIR

lady, 35-40 years, Tel:
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VIVACIOUS

lady, 35-40 years, Tel:
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WIDOW

lady, 35-40 years, Tel:
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MUSIC LOVING

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W. CAMBS

lady, 35-40 years, Tel:
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NOTT'S

lady, 35-40 years, Tel:
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ACTIVE

lady, 35-40 years, Tel:
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PRINCESS

lady, 35-40 years, Tel:
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READY

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ESSEX

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SLEEPERS

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SOUTH

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STYLISH

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SUSSEX

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TALL

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THIS

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TRIBE

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WANTED

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WOMAN

GAMES

23

CHESS

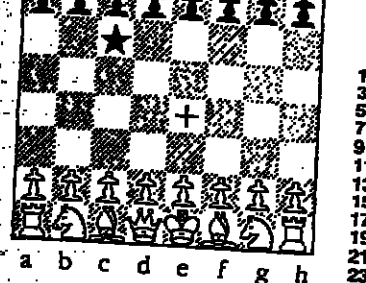
by Raymond Keene

In response to numerous reader requests, I am devoting this article to a recapitulation of the standard modern chess notation, by means of which games and chess problems can be followed.

Chess, unlike almost all other sports, has a perfect medium in its standard, easy-to-use notation for relaying the drama and details of any specific game. Readers who are comparatively new to the game, or who have only learned the older "English Descriptive" notation, will find what follows helpful. It is assumed that the reader already knows how to play chess.

In writing down the moves, each piece is represented by a letter as follows except for the pawns, where no special symbol is used.

N Knight B Bishop
R Rook Q Queen
K King



The squares on the chessboard are described by co-ordinates, consisting of a letter followed by a number (see diagram). For instance, the square marked with a cross is "e4", the square marked with a star is "c6". This follows exactly the same principle as reading a reference on an A-Z street guide or road map. Everybody can pick this up easily. There is no mystery to it at all.

Whenever a piece moves, the initial symbol of that piece appears at the start of the move. For example, White's fourth move in the following game shows that a knight (N) moves to the square d2. When a pawn moves, only the square on which it arrives when the move is completed is mentioned. A perfect example is White's first

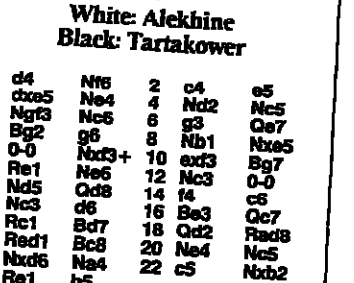
move 1 d4 (white pawn goes to d4) in the game which follows, and Black's second move 1...e5 (black pawn goes to e5).

Captures are denoted by "x". Thus White's third move in the game, 3 dxe5, shows that White's pawn on the d-file captures on e5. Note also the following special symbols:

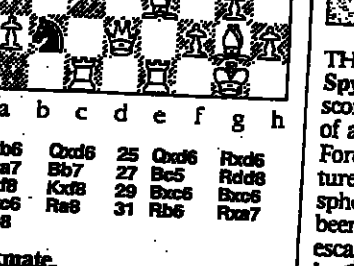
+ Check 1 Good move
!! Excellent move 7 Bad move
?? Blunder

... Black move follows

The following 1932 win by Alekhine in London shows the principles of simplified modern notation perfectly, but an important point to note is White's possibility of the *en passant* capture on move 24, which I have furnished with a diagram. Although Black's pawn on b7 moves directly to b5, White can, on the next move only, avail himself of the opportunity to capture on b6. This Alekhine promptly does.



White: Alekhine
Black: Tartakover



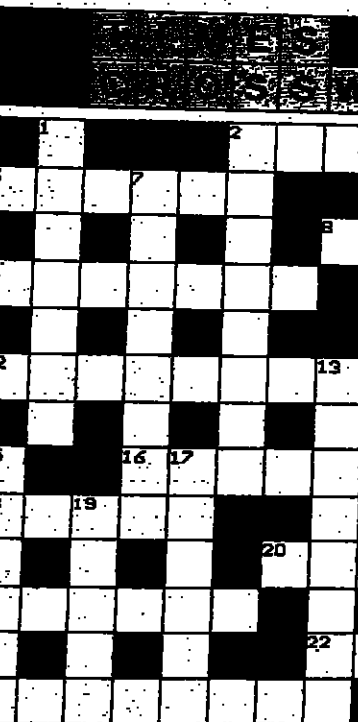
Checkmate.

By Raymond Keene

This position is from the game Wajkshetti-Alekhine, Russia 1908. The black queen has invaded the white position but now looks as if she might have ventured too far. Alekhine, however, proved that this was not the case with his next move. What did he play? Black to play.

Send your answers on a postcard to *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first three correct answers drawn on Thursday will win a British Chess Magazine publication. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Last week's solution: 1...Re2



No 749

ACROSS

- 2 Bestowal of favour (8)
- 6 Suit, turn into (6)
- 8 Textile retailer (6)
- 9 Advance, expand; exploit (7)
- 10 South African province (5)
- 12 Stope coffins (10)
- 16 "What can go wrong, will" principle (7,3)
- 18 Safe port (5)
- 20 In proportion (3,4)
- 21 One from Friendly Islands (6)
- 22 Passive; on one's back (6)
- 23 Where waters taken (eg in Bath) (4,4)

DOWN

- 1 Non-specific (7)
- 2 A little unwell; at a discount (5,3)
- 3 Well; bound (6)
- 4 Data read by computer (5)
- 5 Belt, corset (6)
- 7 Conquer (8)
- 11 Primitive runway (8)
- 13 Epigrammatic maxim (8)
- 14 Progressing lamely; stopping (7)
- 15 Immure; silence (4,2)
- 17 Inequitable (6)
- 19 (Eg snake) poison (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 748

ACROSS: 2 Goose pimples 8 Cygnet 9 Cuckoo 10 Ulna 12 Microbe 14 Skirted 15 Onit 17 Kimono 18 Indent 20 Agricultural
DOWN: 1 Ugly duckling 2 Gown 3 Circuit 4 Spectrum 6 EFTA 7 Exorbitantly 11 Narcotic 13 Decorum 16 Tilt 19 Dare

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PUNCHLINE

READERS are invited to write an amusing caption for the cartoon (right). The cartoon, from the Punch library, includes the contemporary caption.

The cartoon will be printed again next week on the Games page with a caption selected from those submitted.

Send caption suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to: Cartoon caption (103) Weekend Games Page, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN

The editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, April 10.



The winning caption for last week's cartoon (above) was submitted by R. Rogers, of Dorking, Surrey

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

TREFA

- a. Non-kosher food
- b. A diminished crochet
- c. A Bulgarian coin

TATTIE BOGLE

- a. A velocipede
- b. A scarecrow
- c. A crochet stitch

SYSSITIA

- a. Eating together
- b. Wasting away
- c. Duckweed infestation

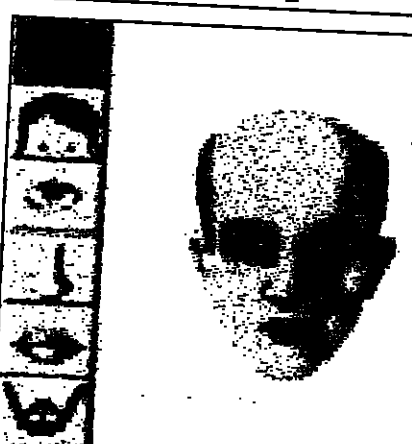
STATANT

- a. A politician
- b. Standing in profile
- c. The soldier ant

Answers on page 17

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott



Spycraft: good cloak-and-dagger stuff

THE OPENING sequence of *Spycraft* glides along to a sinister score and all the gloss and gravitas of a multi-million-dollar Harrison Ford thriller. As political adventures go, here is the most atmospheric for a long time. There have been several attempts at espionage escapades, from *Floor 13* to *Crisis in the Kremlin*. Missing from all was some good cloak-and-dagger terror and intrigue. From Activision for dual Dos and Windows 95 formats, *Spycraft* comes on three CD-Roms and connects from the start like *Velcro*.

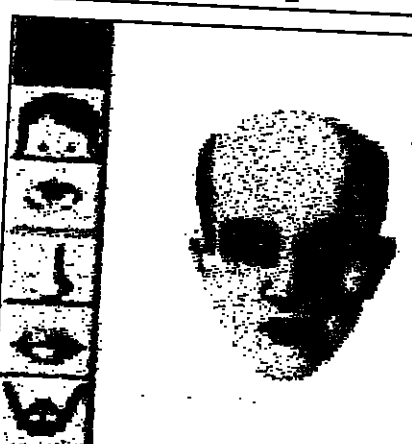
First you get the opportunity to look out violent scenes; a necessary option since some of the footage is highly graphic. Within seconds you are put to work as special agent Thorn of the CIA. You are trained to use surveillance gadgetry, then set off to track down agency moles and the lethal electric gun which has been stolen.

There are many frightening moments, though some of the puzzles are plain awkward. Another neat touch: your talking personal communications centre sounds a little like a female version of the homicidal computer HAL in Stanley Kubrick's film *2001*, and "she" is on

your side. However, the many names of agents and special missions soon blend as one - Yuri, Grendel, Operation Procat and so on - and there are no points for originality: the crux of the tale centres on the Cold War chestnut, West v East. And, in the light of the latest Channel 4 revelations of Britain's part in the international trade of torture weapons, it is not easy to stomach the sequences in which you can torture your prisoners. Certain torture would be sitting through most of your suggestions for a dynamic new Ken Russell movie were they ever, god forbid, to reach the silver screen. In third place, scooping a Logitech hand-held, black-and-white scanner, is Helen Davenport from Oxford for *Symphonie Fantastique*, a grim film based on the life and music of Hector Berlioz. The film is set in 1829 in France, and the 26-year-old composer is madly in love with an Irish actress, Harriet Smithson.

"He wishes to create a masterpiece to sweep Harriet off her feet and into his arms," Helen explains.

by Tim Wapshott



Spycraft: good cloak-and-dagger stuff

the beautiful features of his beloved Harriet "metamorphose into that of the nightmarish witch from his dream". The final Russell-esque touch is that all dream sequences would be mimed to the *Symphonie Fantastique* score.

A hand-held Scanman Color goes to Mr Richard Symonds of Bexleyheath, Kent, for *Dempsey*. *The Dog Opera*, an uplifting tale of a dog born at the wrong time in the wrong place. The voice of Dempsey is provided by Madonna, with her owner played by Cher. Jeremy Irons as Kenneth Baker, Home Secretary, and Brigitte Bardot playing herself.

He writes: "The movie begins with the passing of the Dangerous Dogs Act: Dempsey's days are numbered. She is caught in the park by a policeman, imprisoned and kept in solitary confinement." Her owner arranges a Free Dempsey campaign, which leads to the dog's eventual release. Logitech's top-of-the-range, self-feeding A4 Page-Scan colour scanner goes to our overall winner, Mr

C. Dunn of Edinburgh, for his suffocating treatment of *Purgatory*. He writes: "In the film, a director - perhaps Russell - is making a movie about infamous celebrities who have died and are waiting in purgatory, represented by a white-washed movie set boycotted by striking technicians."

"The director and his actors, in costume as Cleopatra, Rasputin, Wagner, James Dean, Marilyn Monroe, Caligula, Byron and others, discuss the production, the characters they play, their relationship with each other and with the director. Each has stories of his extravaganzas, tyrannical methods of direction and abuses. Wounds open as they tell their tales."

Although drawn to the director, none of the company likes him, and when they realise this they rip apart the white set to reveal instead a blood-red affair from which the director cannot escape. He is either dead or living out his own purgatory.

"And I would like a medium vodka dry Martini - with a slice of lemon peel. Shaken and not stirred, please. I would prefer Russian or Polish vodka." James Bond in Ian Fleming's *Dr No* (1958).

No 3352: The Downy Bear by Mr Lemon

CLUES are normal but each contains two adjacent words surplus to the clue: the initial letters of these in the order presented spell out a theorem. This should enable solvers to locate The Downy Bear, after whom it is named, and to unravel the simple code in which he is disguised. Punctuation at the end of clues, other than 7, refers to the theorem. Points are deemed to be at the centre of squares. Solvers should highlight the coded name in the grid and write the decoded name below it.

ACROSS

- 1 It's the opening in France to any diggings inside tin-miner? (4)
- 4 Care about any big bird flying from Durham perhaps (8)
- 11 Black Emperor Claudius Lucius eats pig that's not very good (5)
- 12 Lord Ian retires after fuss involving Edward (6)
- 13 Elvis eviscerated in morgue outside necropolis perhaps looks like this (8)
- 14 Light always lambent on street and on A-road? (12)
- 16 For a deliberate slice Irwin'll now try a bit of drag with iron (4)
- 18 This 17 grip initially to make eccentric aunt's pigtail? (5)
- 19 Nicola derides fellow's dried flower (7)
- 21 Lifelong marijuana inhaler cured of ruptures (7)
- 22 Take in nervous loose animal to straddle once (5)
- 24 Bloody avenger in Erin ripped out Gael's heart (4)
- 27 Essential support for animal about the middle of April or Nisan - before the hot weather (12)
- 29 Taproot's always lovely grated into meat dish (8)
- 30 Mohammed's son-in-law has agents following girl in Nepal (6)

- 31 Perhaps goat's last to quit hill eating thistles (5)
- 32 He expects they'll demand extravagant miracles (8)
- 33 I abandon country life next Thursday (4)

DOWN

- 1 He's frightened of John Bull poaching a job to smash hitting Evert (12)
- 2 During dust storm in Scotland gunners ignoring notices cause train to crash (6)
- 3 Head saw prince tittle excessively, with quarts of Hebrew liquor in corner (8)
- 4 He composed "Saints" or one rather sentimental version thereof (5)
- 5 I enter race to review Edmund Curll's saucy books (7)
- 6 Runyon forks out nothing for a cony - the skintflint (5)
- 7 Old friends screen entrance from below (4)
- 8 They attack in armed merchant vessel laden with fuel oil mostly (8)
- 9 Before long a doctor will be essential to the Church's vicar (5)
- 10 Admitting negligence school is disciplining teenage drinker, e's twice played truant, (12)
- 15 Chinese literary proverb - a more curious one's found in Pennsylvania; (8)
- 17 Old Sam's out battling without opening bowler noticing, (8)
- 20 Everybody's set on concert music being first class; (7)
- 23 A little Irish nun fails to finish the scriptures (6)
- 24 King's evil exchequer ordered torment (5)
- 25 A new substitute in stone now available for porticos (5)
- 26 Checks current Life Insurers' balance sheet (5)
- 28 A scientific journal never ever gives them prominence? (4)

Solution to 3349: Deregistration by Essem

Doctors struck off / deregistered were at 20A CHALCED, 7D PREDICATING, 26D COIN(CIDE)S (Doctors - "doctored" dice) and 23A (S)MOKER, 31A EMBRASURE and 12D TEN(DR)ON. Different meanings of doctor were included at 1A SEA-SURGEON, 13A FALSIFY, 40A CASTRATE and 22D MENDER.

• The winner is F.D.H. Atkinson, of Claygate, Surrey. The runners up are: Jenny Keene, of London W8, and R.W.C. Cockedge, of Northwood, Middlesex.

• Statistics relating to 1995 crosswords, including personal record, are available to senders of an A4E (220mm x 110mm; from overseas, stamp exempt) to J.E. Green, 31 Bishopric Court, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1TU.



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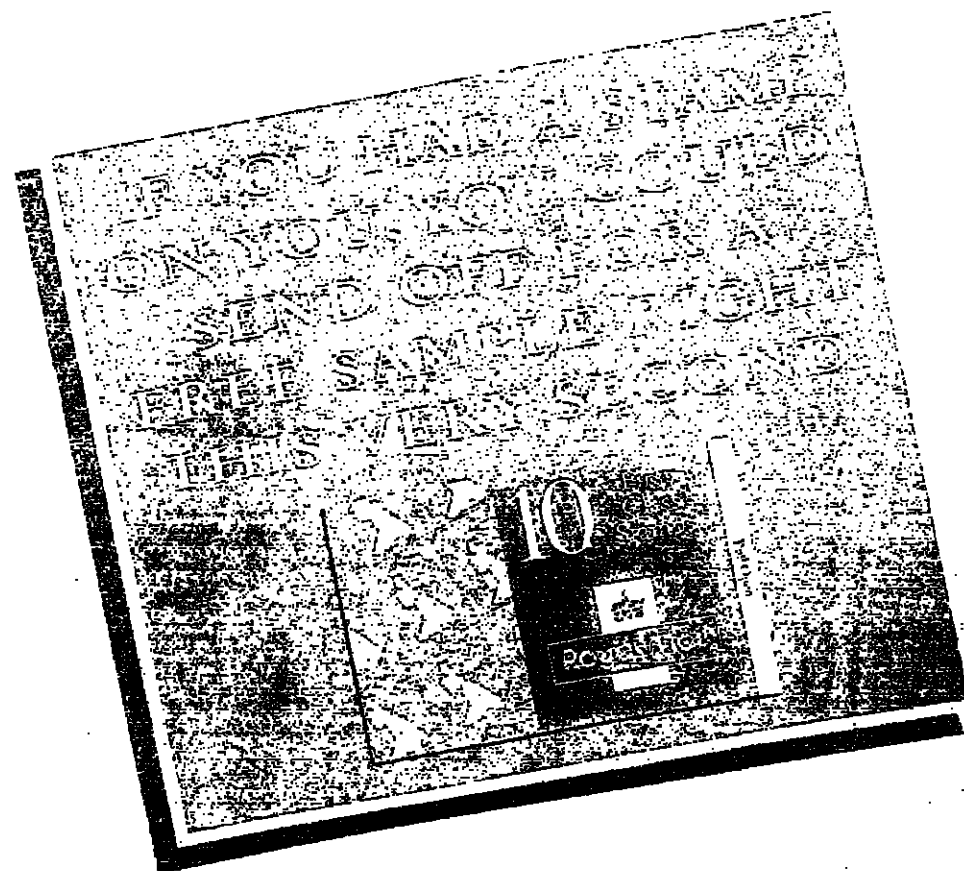
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مستأجر



Choosing wackier wheels for the bridal path

Page 3



Armed Services join our driving contest



Page 9

SATURDAY APRIL 6 1996

Rock star Chris Rea tells Kevin Eason of the film dream that began in his father's ice-cream shop

Once more, with a crimson passion



Wolfgang von Trips driving the Sharknose Ferrari at the Monaco Grand Prix in 1961, the season in which he was killed at Monza. In distant Middlesbrough, a small boy was captivated by the glamour and the excitement, the drama and the courage

Chris Rea turned up the collar of his blue trench coat against the wind that whipped along the wide beach. The singer, who had his biggest chart success with *The Road to Hell*, was making a film about his passion for Ferrari... but was longing for his Volvo.

We were on the set of Rea's new film, *La Passione*, the story of a young boy who is dumbfounded by the flickering television images of the 1961 Monaco Grand Prix, where a young German aristocrat was tearing around the circuit in a Sharknose Ferrari.

That boy was Rea at the back of his parents' ice-cream shop opposite Albert Park in Middlesbrough. The television picture was black-and-white, but he knew that the Ferrari driven by Count Wolfgang von Trips was red... very red. *La Passione* was ignited that day.

"You are told that this is a Sharknose Ferrari and you are told it is being driven by a German count," he says. "You are told the car is blood red, even though you can't see that, and then later there are only the newspaper pictures... and the legend grows and grows. All I had was a crumpled picture from the *Daily Express* of that Sharknose Ferrari. But that day, the day of the '61 Monaco Grand Prix was when I was hooked and I have been hooked ever since."

Except on this windswept day on the sands of Weston-

super-Mare, Rea had driven a Ferrari F355 for hours along crowded motorways to the West Country so that it could be filmed, but wished he could have travelled in the comfort of his usual transport, a Volvo — "not sure which model" — with its compact disc player, on-board fax and telephone. What would be a dream for most people — driving a £90,000 sports car — had turned into a chore, for this was a day when the lyrics of his hit song had an almost prophetic ring about it: "This ain't no technological freeway. Oh No, this is the road to hell".

The motorways had been jammed with 12-mile tailbacks, and, even when they cleared, a Ferrari moving at even a fraction over the speed limit is a juicy and enjoyable catch for the Boys in Blue.

Rea pines for an age when roads were empty and cars had grace as well as a function, but he is realistic enough to know it is a pointless lament: "There is no fun any more in driving on the roads. The time for cars like these," he says, gazing at the imposing fluted rear of the F355, "is disappearing. There is no place for them in a world where everything is becoming functional and we have no room to move."

That is the reason for the movie, a musical fantasy which allows Rea to illustrate the sort of passion that a young boy develops not just for cars, but one car. In Rea's case, Ferrari, not surprisingly



Rea and his replica Sharknose, so good that Phil Hill, von Trips's partner, was astonished

as the son of an Italian father who talked endlessly of the cars with the Prancing Horse badge and their exploits on the track. The Sharknose embodied everything on that day in Middlesbrough — glamour, excitement, drama, courage — and he wanted it to play a central part in the movie. Except that one did not exist. All the Sharknose cars were destroyed at the end of that 1961 season in which von Trips died and his partner, Phil Hill, won the championship.

So Rea made one. He went to friend Paul Harvey and asked: "Can we do it?" Harvey said they could and they

started scouring Europe for film footage and photographs that could help to bring the Sharknose back to life. Rea says they had only one technical drawing for help and lots of pictures — including one of von Trips's car upside down on the day he died at Monza. "That helped us to see the construction underneath the car. Trouble was that a lot of the photography in those days was very creative, using lenses that caused a little bit of distortion, so we had a lot of trouble getting the proportions just right."

The V6 Dino engine came from a scrapped Ferrari and,

hundreds of hours later, Rea had his Sharknose, a working replica of the real thing so good that Phil Hill was astonished when he saw it last year. "He couldn't believe it," says Rea. How good was it to have the former world champion stunned by the replica? "Meeting Phil Hill was like the first time I met Eric Clapton."

If Clapton is God in popular music mythology, that presumably puts Hill somewhere high up on the heavenly grid in motor racing. And a long way from Middlesbrough when Rea was struggling to make his way as a musician

Continued on page 2

WOLFGANG VON TRIPS, THE TRAGIC CAVALIER

IN AN AGE when racing drivers were handsome and gallant, nobody on the track out a more dashing figure than Count Wolfgang von Trips. He was young and aristocratic... and cheerfully clueless as to what was going on under the bonnet of the beasts he was driving.

But that was not his job: he was supposed to take them out on the track and joust with names that have become legends in motor racing, such as Stirling Moss, Jim Clark, Mike Hawthorn and Phil Hill.

He was almost the Michael Schumacher of his day, the fearless German at the wheel of a red Italian Ferrari. But the adage "Live fast, die young" came horribly true in 1961 at Monza. He crashed, losing his own life, his car killing 14 spectators in the crowd. It was an appalling end to a short, but glamorous, career.

Born in 1928 on the family estate near Cologne, von Trips was drawn into Formula One when he caught the eye of Enzo Ferrari, winning the 1,000-kilometre sports cars race in a Porsche RS Spyder at the Nurburgring, the famous racetrack not far from his home.

He was given the fifth Ferrari entry at the 1956 Italian Grand Prix, but the start of his senior career was



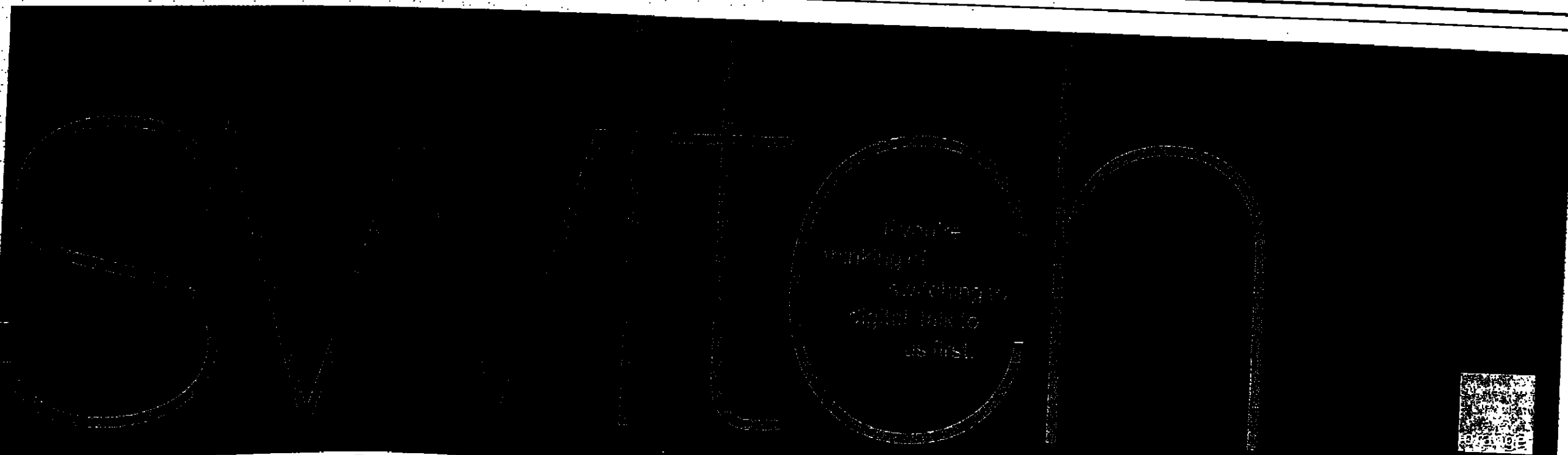
Von Trips: a legend, but for the wrong reason

was less than logical when applied to von Trips's finely-chiselled features, but it seemed to sum up the well of affection for the man.

The apparent clumsiness that had plagued his career was banished in 1961 when Enzo Ferrari gave him and his American partner, Phil Hill, the new T156, nicknamed "Sharknose" because of its wide-flared nostrils that stretched to a long pointed tip. Von Trips powered to victory in the Dutch and British grands prix and was suddenly a champion-in-waiting.

HE WENT to Monza leading Phil Hill in the championship by four points and took pole position. The Sharknose weaved and cut its way through the race until von Trips tried to overtake Jim Clark's Lotus at the famous Parabolica curve.

As von Trips cut in to win the racing line on the bend, the two cars came together, locking wheels to send the Sharknose spinning violently out of control. It mounted the grass banking; von Trips was thrown clear and killed instantly, while the car careered into the crowd. Phil Hill won the championship and von Trips became a legend — but for the wrong reason.



Available from Dixons, Carphone Warehouse, The Link, Tandy, Currys, Comet, John Lewis Partnership, Granada, Radio Rentals, Tempo, Norweb, Hutchison Telecom Retail, Escom and other leading high street and independent stockists nationwide. Call 0800 80 10 80 for full details.

The front of a modern car folds up in an accident . . . unless a rigid lump of steel prevents that happening

● SCOTLAND
M8 Strathclyde. Lane restrictions westbound at junction 15.
A749 Strathclyde. Dalnarnock Bridge Glasgow closed southbound for repairs.
M90 Tayside. Major roadworks at junction 10 with lane closures in both directions.

NEWS IN BRIEF

HALF of Britain's diesel vehicles could fail the new MoT smoke emissions test, which was introduced this week, according to research carried by Mobil. The company — launching what is claimed to be a cleaner diesel fuel, called Cleanerburn Diesel Plus — tested 1,300 cars and claims its new fuel could reduce smoke by an average 37 per cent.

MICK HUCKNALL lead singer with Simply Red, chose green for his new MGF. The Manchester-born singer was one of the first in the queue for Rover's little sports car, going for the £18,000 high-performance VVC version. Like half the MGF's buyers, he went for British Racing Green.

FORD has introduced two-tier fixed-price servicing for owners of older cars. Rapid Fit, the company's fast-fit network, will charge \$39.95 for oil and filter change, plus checks on wheels, brakes, exhaust, suspension, lights and wipers. For \$59.95, the Super Plus Service also covers air filter, spark plugs and ignition breakers or diesel fuel filter.

NISSAN will have side-impact airbags on its QX luxury saloon range next year. The company is following the lead of Volvo by going for inflatable (that cushion the heads of drivers and passengers if their car is hit from the side. The QX will be first model, but the company promises to extend sidebags to the rest of its range through 1998.

IF YOU have an old car, get it protected, warns the AA. The organisation says that cars registered between five and seven years ago are most likely to be the targets of thieves, simply because new cars have better anti-theft systems, such as alarms and engine immobilisers.

Christmas card list, but in this case I have some sympathy with Mr Morris. The Bill was talked out because, under our membership of the European Union, the legislation would have no effect. There is no existence of an EU document called the External Projections Directive and only by getting this amended can Britain get rid of these murderous devices.

I am told that Mr Norris recently met Neil Kinnock, the EU transport



And, in case you persist in thinking that bull bars are doing you some good, they are not. The front end of all vehicles is designed to act in a certain way in an accident, reducing the impact on passengers. Indeed, an increasing number of car manufacturers make the presence of front crumple zones a key part of their safety publicity: the front of modern cars simply folds up in an accident... unless of course a rigid lump of steel called a bull bar prevents that happening.

MY REMARKS about the crazy plan to have sponsorship on direction signs brings a response from reader Alan Blackwood, who demonstrates that our own Ministry of Daft Ideas is way behind that of Romania.

He sends a photograph of a set of Romanian traffic lights. The amber light carries a Camel logo at the bottom and the Camel name at the top. Interesting, that: Camel wants us to show caution when we smoke, but has resisted advertising on the red light.

George Stevenson and his Porsche 911 Turbo: "It has been off the road for four months in the past year and it's time Porsche admitted it is a rogue model."

Despite several visits to the nearest dealer — 80 miles away — the car continued to mist up and Porsche agreed to check it. Mechanics found a defective rear quarter glass seal and that both door seals were also soft and seeped water on to the floor. The items were renewed, and Porsche was confident the faults had been eradicated after water-testing the car and leaving it outside in poor weather.

music stars, such as George Harrison or Nick Mason, drummer with Pink Floyd.

Rea knows that doors open to an international rock star that would be closed to Chris Rea, son of an ice-cream salesman: he has had 18 laps in a Jordan Formula One car — admitting himself credit-

AUTOFAX by David L.

FLYING ROUND THE WORLD SINCE 1930, THE RACING DRIVER THE MISS VICTOR EBERLE SWITCHED 1400 BHP OVER HONG KONG TO OBSERVE THE TWO MINUTE SILENCE ON ARMISTICE DAY.....

IN SEPTEMBER 1967 ALL TRAFFIC

Now he has a full international race licence and has become part of the fixture and fittings of the classic car and racing scene, bitten by the same bug that infects other

October until December 4, but within two days of being returned was worse than ever," Stevenson says. Porsche then took the car back to Reading where a door membrane was replaced.

he reported: "The engine was started and within 20 seconds of running, mist had built up on the windows. After 75 seconds, there was mist on the instrument dials but vestiges of cleared screen were visible adjacent to the screen dials. "By this time, however, the remainder of the screen and the interior windows were so badly misted that it was unsafe to drive as vision was seriously impaired". The consultant added that the screen took eight minutes to clear and the windows ten.

A Porsche spokesman says: "We have tested the car in all sorts of conditions and have been unable to recreate the problem."

While Stevenson pursues his claim for compensation with the help of his lawyers, Iris Hamilton of Wanstead, east London, has with the aid

Harry Alkin, her solicitor, says: "The dealer was dismissive of the gearbox problem, but my client has had the report of an RAC inspector who found other things wrong, including the brakes." Ford agreed to take back the car and invited Mrs Hamilton to choose another. "I suppose I am a glutton for punishment," but I do like the shape of the new Escort and it is a good size for my needs," she says.

Volkswagen has also replaced the Caravelle which had given Geraldine Davies of north Devon so much trouble and was featured in Cars from Hell last week, but asked for a £2,250 contribution as the vehicle was 15 months old and had done 17,000 miles. "We think this is a fair conclusion to an unhappy story and hope Mrs Davies is now a satisfied customer," a spokesman says.

Consumer groups and trading standards officers across the country are claiming a victory this week as car companies prepare to drop the controversial practice of charging extra for delivery and number plates on new cars. These hidden extra charges can add as much as £600 to the list price of a car and have long been a bone of contention between dealers and customers.

Volkswagen is first of the major car companies to announce that it will now incorporate these charges within its list prices. From mid-March, all charges for delivery, number plates and 12 months road fund tax have been included in VW list prices. Other companies are expected to follow suit, possibly in time for the August buying bonanza.

"We would welcome this move," said Andrew McIlwraith of the Consumers' Association. "It has always been completely incomprehensible to customers that they should see one price advertised and then be told by a dealer that they have to pay an extra £400 or £500. Equally, it has never made sense that the delivery charge for, say, a Ford Fiesta made and sold in Dagenham should be the same as a Ford Fiesta in Glasgow."

Until now only Daewoo, Saab, Skoda and Proton published list prices that genuinely reflected the cost of buying a new car. Indeed, Daewoo believes that it was the high-profile advertising campaign of its "What you see is what you pay" policy that forced the rest of the industry to take action.

But there have been other pressures. Ford faced criticism recently for increasing delivery charges and several companies have had to pay hefty fines as trading standards officers clamped down on advertisements which did not make it absolutely clear that delivery charges would be added to list prices. Ford and Ford Credit Europe were fined £23,000 by Chester magistrates last year for a series of national advertisements in which the on-the-road price of a car was not clear.

The scrapping of separate delivery charges will be welcomed by car dealers. "It has been a bone of contention between dealers and their customers for a major one and more often caused for price discussion with the customer," said Alan Pulham of the National Franchised Dealers Association.

"I think it's inevitable that public opinion now decrees we wind the delivery charges into the overall price. Remember, it's the manufacturer who sets these charges, not the dealer."

Paul Buckner of Volkswagen added: "I think the whole industry will have to follow our lead. After all, you can't even buy an electrical appliance these days without the plug being included."

Rea knows that doors open to an international rock star that would be closed to Chris Rea, son of an ice-cream salesman: he has had 18 laps in a Jordan Formula One car — acquitting himself creditably — and raced a BMW touring car in the TOCA

But illness — which led to six operations last year — changed him. Endless touring and studio work paled and he dictated the storyline for *La Passione* from his hospital bed, asking the nurse to switch his dictaphone on and off. With it came the music for

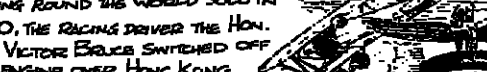
"I still love motor racing, adore it but I have other things in my life now," he says. "Maybe later in the year I will be at Silverstone with the Caterham: we'll see."

But cars — at least temporarily — have taken a back

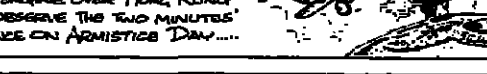
and another replica Ferrari — of the TR61 Le Mans car — also made for the film will probably be sold at the end of shooting, and why there are no Ferraris in the garage at the Rea home, just a Caterham ... and that Volvo

AUTOFAX by David Long and Les Evans

FLYING ROUND THE WORLD SOLO IN 1930, THE RACING DRIVER THE HON. MRS VICTORIA BALCH SWIFTED OFF HER BRIDGE OVER HONG KONG TO OBSERVE THE 'TWO MINUTES' SILENCE ON ARMISTICE DAY.....



IN SEPTEMBER 1967 ALL TRAFFIC WAS BANNED IN SWEDEN FOR TWO DAYS AS THE COUNTRY SWITCHED TO DRIVING ON THE RIGHT



سنة ١٤١٧

URDAY APRIL 6 1996
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SATURDAY APRIL 6 1996

CAR 96

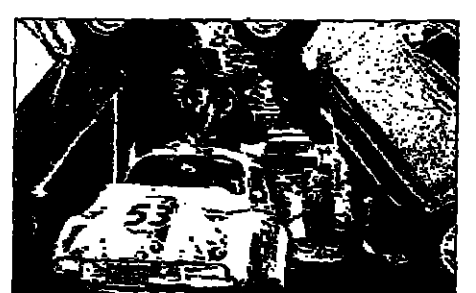
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Trotting and soaring: one bride chose an open landau, another couple left by helicopter



Get me to the church in style... this quartet of brides showed the way to do it, and the age of the sleek white limousine may be passing. Morag Preston looks at wackier wheels for the big day



Lift-off and Beetles: military air transport and setting off in Walt Disney's Herbie

Four weddings...

Milkmen have done it in milk floats, ice cream sellers have done it in cream vans, and binmen have done it in dustcarts... just to get to the church on the time.

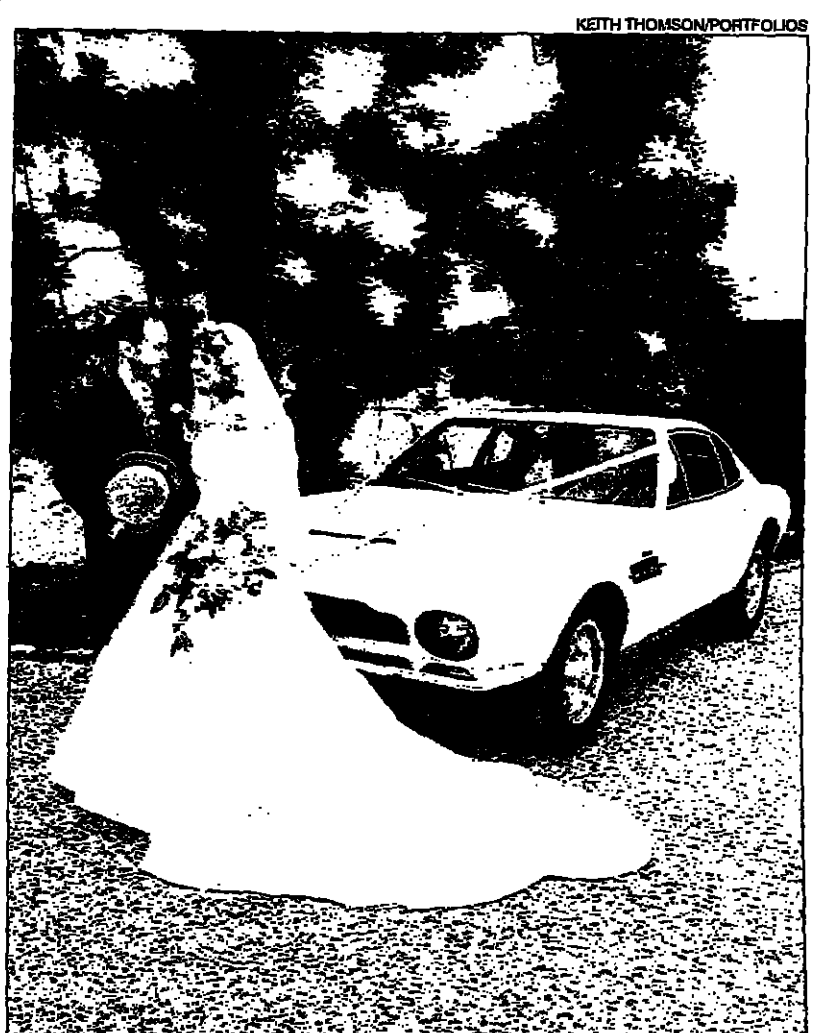
Brides want to arrive in a style that will be imprinted on the memories of family and guests forever and turn the wedding album into a tribute to the wacky world of wedding motoring. And they are quite happy to spend whatever it takes. According to *You and Your Wedding* magazine, the average cost of wedding wheels is £225.

"People are looking for something a bit different," says Norman Hodgkinson, who has more than 3,000 cars on his books at Carriages Vehicles Agency in Surrey. "Eight years ago the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow was everybody's choice, but it has had its day. Ten per cent of my customers will go for something wacky. The rest will be pressured into something more conventional once the mother-in-law gets involved."

The return of James Bond in *Goldeneye* excited a flurry of interest in Aston Martin, says Olive Richardson, who runs Cars of Character in Buckinghamshire. "They've probably been to one or two friends' weddings, and don't want the same as they had. It's keeping ahead of the Joneses."



Holy wedding bells: the Batmobile, a two-seater Lincoln Continental chassis, contains confetti bombs that go off as the couple leave



Bonded: an 007 Aston lookalike is a way to "keep ahead of the Joneses"

Rod George, who owns a white James Bond-style Aston Martin V8 which he hires out for weddings, says business is booming. "I've already had five bookings for this year."

Couples looking for something other than a chauffeur-driven limousine can choose anything from Pope John II's white Range Rover "Popemobile" in which he toured Britain to the original Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.

Rod has been offering his services as a wedding chauffeur for more than a year: "I've been a car enthusiast all my life, and am into vintage car racing. The guy I bought the Aston from said he needed to borrow the car for a day to take a bride to church. In the end, I did the job. Now I just do it for fun."

"Often the car is arranged on the quiet. Because it's a he-man car, I turn up with the groom and best man. They're usually fairly nervous, so I make general conversation. We talk about the car, and how the couple met. I always come armed with tissues and a box of paracetamol in case anyone has a headache from the night before."

"I wait for all the dramas when I turn up at the bride's house, but I've never had any trouble fitting dresses into the car. Some brides want to be

strategically late just to keep the other half on tenterhooks. Once I was so early that we met the wrong set of guests at the church, and I had to do a couple of laps of the block. I'm not averse to opening the throttle fairly wide and letting the thing accelerate as fast as possible." (Which, in theory, could be fast, with 160mph available from the big V8.)

"The car is decorated with lucky charms and ribbons, but I'm not a suit and peaked-cap merchant. You don't want to be more dressed up than the star of the show. It takes at least three hours to get the car ready. It can be in mint condition when I leave, and after 100 miles it's covered in grime. You want the car as perfect as you can if it's going to appear in photos people will be cherishing."

David Coomber-Chart, 42, owns Bespoke Taylormade, a custom bike builders and restorers, based in Kent, where couples can choose from a fleet of Harley-Davidsons. He says: "We have a cream and yellow 1969 Electra Glide in blue for the groom. The couple can also have a cavalcade of up to six Harleys. The other drivers are

all clients who we have built bikes for — they love it. Costs range from £500 for one bike to £2,500, but we use a white 1960s Cadillac if it's raining. The bikes cost £28,000 each and it takes at least three hours to clean one properly. We don't advertise, or we'd be rushed off our feet."

"For a lot of people, it's their second time around and they've already done the white wedding bit. These people are usually in their thirties, with a lot of money. We've even had a pair wear leathers up the aisle, and one girl in a short skirt, who wasn't half as embarrassed as I was getting her on the bike. We've had a few say they wished they'd known what it was going to be like, and they would've taken a longer route. We put ribbons on the bar. Most people are gobsmacked, but we have had grandmothers in their nineties tell us they used to ride bikes like these all the time."

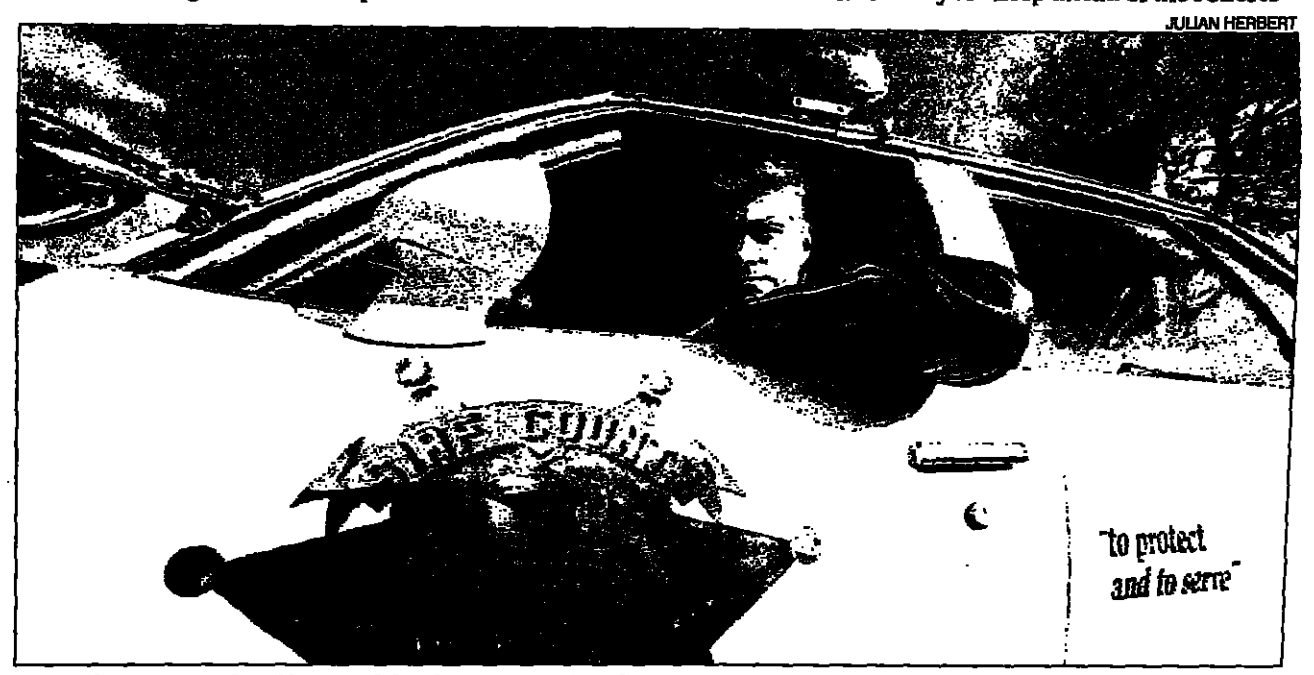
John Restall, 44, a vehicle inspector in Portsmouth, owns a black and white American state police car, which he hires out for weddings: "It has every conceivable extra, from the wire-cage to a siren. I wear a

uniform and shades, carry a genuine .375 Magnum, and speak in an American accent. At the beginning it was terrible — I couldn't go out of the door without being stopped by the police."

I once did a wedding where the groom worked on a farm. The couple were being taken away on a tractor, and the route took them on a motorway. The driver was worried about getting pulled over, when I came whizzing out and told them to pull over. I gave them the third degree and the driver went white. The best man had set it up, and there was a crowd of people waiting round the corner.

"None of the people I do it for are normal and it always turns into quite a farce. My youngest kid lives for the car. It has made him a hero at school."

Mark Perkins, 33, is a property developer whose side line in character cars is taking up an increasing amount of his time. He hires out his Batmobile from the 1960s TV series, *Del Boy's Reliant Robin* and *Mr Bean's Mini* for weddings: "Each year, business gets stronger, and it's crazy in the summer. The Batmobile is a two-seater Lincoln Continental chassis, which the husband-to-be usu-



American connection: "None of the the people I do it for are normal," says John Restall of his US state police car

...and a funeral

Few things can be considered a certainty in life, but the vast majority of us will end up being seen dead in a hearse. But even in death, style can be as important as in life.

Barry Alvin has a £71,000 Daimler, which he designed with the high-tech modern mourner in mind. "The vehicle is unique," he says. "It has got a built-in organ, which I can run into a chapel if they haven't got any music there. It's also got a built-in camera for recording the events, and is air-conditioned front and back to keep the windows on to the coffin from steaming up. It's also got a CD and a tape player in case anyone wants a particular song at the chapel."

The undertaker, from Rotherhithe, South London, adds: "People are consumer-aware. For ordinary people, a funeral is the most important event of their lives."

One problem is short-fused city motorists: even funeral corteges fall prey to road rage. "Drivers are either absolutely lovely, or utter pigs. Several times I have nearly been killed by people who have overtaken the cortege and swerved in

John Naish looks at the sort of cars you'd only be seen dead in

behind me. I carry a funeral casket, which has been handed down through my family, and I have to use it to bang drivers' roofs sometimes."

Funeral coaches, Mr Alvin explains, used to be carried by bearers to stop processions being nudged for their corpses by body snatchers. Nowadays, a more contemporary form of theft can still be a problem: "I had a limousine stolen when I was carrying a coffin at a funeral. I heard the engine start up, but I couldn't just drop what I was carrying and run after it."

There is one last special thing about Mr Alvin's new Daimler — its number plate, ALVIN, which, by a bit of nifty typography, appears to spell out ALVIN. Personalised plates are a new trend in undertaking, according to Paul Wilcox, of Wilcox Limousines, who built the Alvin Daimler. "Hearses are the undertaker's shop window, and a lot of firms advertise themselves subtly by having

number plates spelling out their names," he says.

Tradition still holds sway: this is one part of the car market where you won't see a Japanese model. "Mid-range hearses are mostly Fords, Vauxhalls or Rovers, and will sell new for about £40,000. The Daimlers normally go for just under £60,000."

"The owners spend more time in them than they do at their desks or in their own private cars, and everyone in the funeral director's town will see the hearse, so they have to be pleasing to the eye. The cars will be in service for ten to 15 years, and will be kept well maintained. A dirty hearse would be bad for custom."

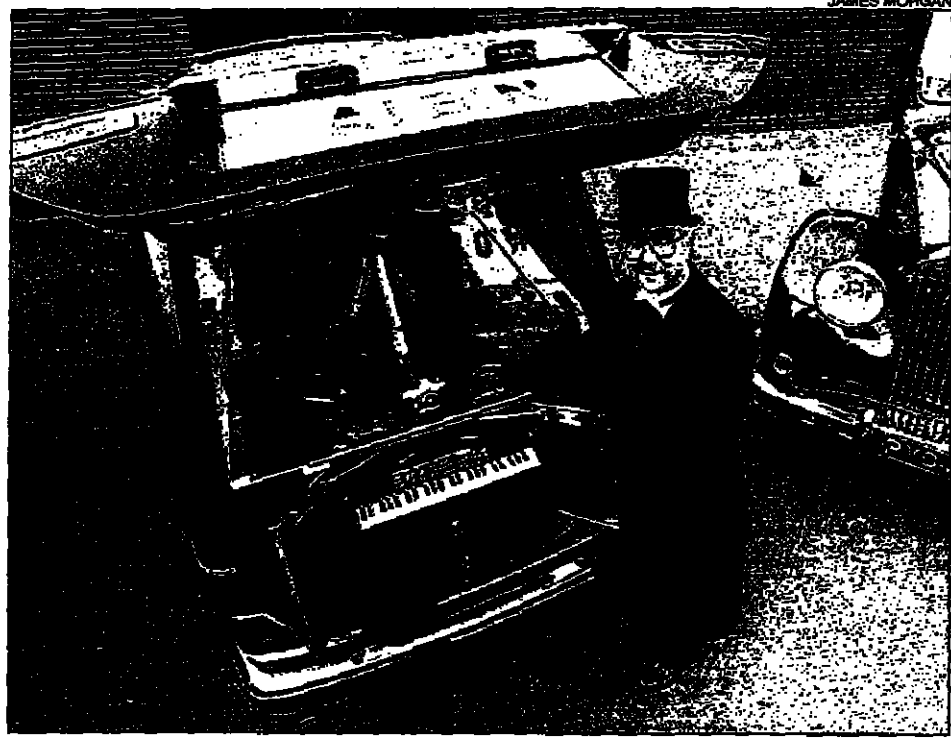
They have to be kept in excellent mechanical condition, too, and it is a tribute to their upkeep that the AA has no record of any hearses breaking down — although cheaper vehicles used to transport bodies do come to grief. "It happens more than you would credit," says a spokeswoman.

"Coffins are quite often moved around in Transit vans, and if they break down it is a real emergency — especially on hot days, because they are carrying perishable goods."

"We had a case where a driver was carrying a coffin in a Volvo when he had a puncture. The coffin was on top of the spare wheel and was too heavy to move. We had to go and help fetch some special coffin support stands in order to shift it."

"Another of our officers remembers going out to a breakdown and finding the driver in tears, saying 'My wife is in there'. He could see no one else in the car, until he noticed an urn on the passenger's side, with a seat belt around it."

Hearses attract interest everywhere: there is even the Classic Hearse Register Collectors' Club, which started two years ago and now has more than 100 members, including people in Australia, South Africa and Germany. Dave Salmon, who runs the club, is restoring a 1947 Humber Pullman, which he bought for £160 14 years ago, and a rare 1961 four-door Austin Princess.



With the high-tech mourner in mind: Barry Alvin and Daimler with built-in organ

100mph final sprint

UNDER that sombre exterior of the modern hearse often beats a furious and powerful heart. They can be potent machines, using the same chassis and high-performance engines of the luxury saloon ranges on which they are based. Barry Alvin says 200mph is the sedate speed for the average cortege, with red lights approached at a respectful pace.

OTHER undertakers have needed that extra bit of pace though. Police chased a hearse at 100mph down the M1 before apprehending Keith Pateman and Gavin Burr. Their excuse: they were late for a funeral.

The hearse, complete with coffin, was being followed closely by a mourners' limousine. The funeral directors said missing their slot at the crematorium would have put the service back a week.

BOTH defendants were given a conditional discharge because of the "exceptional circumstances". Not so lucky was Mark Taylor, who told the court that he had seen the on-up cortege in his mirror and sped up to get out of the way. He was fined £400.

"It's the Princess that I'm most interested in," he says. "It's what I consider to be the traditional hearse, and it is beautiful. If you see a Princess at a funeral, you know that it is a real funeral."

The Essex oil industry fitter trawls around automobiles for parts for his cars, and also collects old copies of undertaker's magazines, such as the

Funeral Service Journal and *Funeral Director and Funeral Service Director* for pictures of old vehicles. But, despite what some may consider to be overwhelming evidence to the contrary, he is quick to stress, "I'm not some morbid weirdo — I just like the cars, though I tend not to go around telling people about it."

Perhaps his passions shows

even hearses can be fun: Chris Jones thinks so. He is racing manager of Swaffham Raceway and says hearse racing is now a minor cult. With admirable understatement, he adds: "It's regarded as a bit of a novelty event. Unfortunately hearses are fairly expensive to come by, but the sight of six or so of them is quite amusing. They are remarkably quick."

The badges line every car park, but touring cars are different, say Kevin Eason and Vaughan Freeman

Watch the grid: here be monsters

The badge come straight from the supermarket car park as familiar a part of daily rotating life as the school run and the trip to the office.

But beneath the garish paint, these Renaults, Audis, Hondas and Fords are monsters. They are on the grid for this year's Ato Trader RAC Touring Car Championships, one of the most exciting race series in the world which has surged to the forefront of motorsport in this country, challenging Formula One for television viewers and race-track crowds. This year's series should attract 30,000 spectators at each race as well as a BBC audience of 1.2 million. Worldwide, it is thought that more than 30 million people will watch.

It is not difficult to understand why touring cars has captured such enormous interest — and forced manufacturers to spend around £6 million each a year keeping teams on the track. Where Formula One

occupies the rarified atmosphere of multi-million pound budgets and features drivers who live Garbo-like hidden from their admirers, touring cars is rough and ready and within touching distance of its fans. Racing is fantastically close rarely is there the sort of procession from pole position to finish that has often made F1 seem less like racing and more like the outside lane of the M25. The drivers are Steve McQueen-style roughsters, from John Cleland, the current champion, to new young guns such as Vauxhall team-mate James Thompson, just 22, and John Bintliffe, 30, who joins Audi.

And all the cars on the grid are recognisably the same hatchbacks and saloons we drive every day. Audi will be challenging for the first time

tomorrow with its formidable A4 quattro, while Vauxhall — last year's winning team — swaps from the Cavalier to the Vectra. Just how seriously the company takes the series can be judged by the fact that a single Vectra costs £200,000 to put on the track, a spare engine another £40,000. You can bet that BMW, Ford, Honda, Peugeot, Renault, Volvo, Nissan and Toyota — who fill the rest of the grid — will be writing cheques at about the same rate.

Being there has now become vital to manufacturers anxious to win a glimmer of interest among potential car buyers inundated with images of cars, not just as a means of transport but as a contributor to their lifestyles and label for their personalities.

Carmakers know that suc-



Young guns: James Thompson, left, and John Bintliffe

cess on the track, followed up by racy special editions help fulfil the motto: "Win on Sunday, sell on Monday." Vauxhall has plans to build a lookalike limited edition road-going version of its racing

Vectra, sharing the same outrageous paint job and low-profile wheels and tyres. Performance will not be quite as stunning — like 145mph in a neck-wrenching few seconds — but there will be compensa-

tions: while the race car is stripped bare and even has thinner paint to save weight, the road version will have all sorts of luxuries — like seats.

Cleland is also managing director of the Borders Group of car dealerships, which specialises in Volvos. When Volvo entered touring cars with the S80 estate car, Cleland says the effect was dramatic: "I saw a phenomenal change in the image of Volvo through motorsport. I have been a dealer since 1989, and people started coming in to get their 340 saloon serviced and would start talking about the cars and the races they had watched over the weekend. Volvo always had good cars, but, largely through touring cars, they have now got good cars with an image that has been enhanced by motorsport."

"I can tell you from having stood in the showroom that if the Vectra beats BMW or Honda in motorsport, it is a definite boon for Vauxhall sales, even though the race car doesn't relate to the road car in any way. The bodysell is basically the same, as is the floorpan and engine block, but that's about it. Even the wind-screen wipers are different, but the motoring public couldn't care less about that."

Stuart Harris, Vauxhall Team marketing manager, adds: "The trick will be to link sales of the Vectra much closer to touring cars. People like to be associated with winners. We would not be involved in the series unless there was a rub-off that benefited our sales." Race Vectras will make star

appearances in Vauxhall High Street showrooms says Harris, to cash in on the "colossal interest" that such cars generate at the track.

"One of the criticisms levelled at cars in this family saloon and company car segment is that they are all the same and a bit bland. The race Vectra addresses that; it gives us cachet," he adds.

You can bet that racing Volvos, Fords, Renaults and the rest will not be far behind in the showrooms, whether they can catch Cleland's Vectra on the track or not.

Though nothing is certain, because this year promises to be one of the hardest fought series in the brief but brilliant history of the touring cars championships.

When life passes in a blur

Alan Copps pins the Audi team as they prepare to repeat their success in Britain

Waiting for Frank Biela to brake at the end of the long straight at Donington Park was nerve-wracking. We appeared to be heading straight for the end of the grandstand, fleetingly I recalled race mechanic Roger King telling me that his pit computer showed a speed of 130mph just here, even with a passenger seat in the car.

Then there was a bump and a series of rapid klunks as Biela hit the brakes and shifted down through the sequential gearbox. Sound effects were all I had to go by. The force was great that my shoulders seemed to burst against the six-point harness, my head, weighted by my crash helmet, jerked forward and my chin hit my chest; by the time I could lift it, we were through the chicane and about to repeat the process before the next corner.

The Audi team with its four-wheel-drive A4 quattros prepared in Germany is this year's most exciting new entrant to the Ato Trader RAC Touring Car Championships, and for 96 will be following its fortunes throughout the season. After years of success on the continent, Biela is bursting to get at the British circuits. He is quietly optimistic, but knows his team has a lot to do to match rivals such as BMW, Renault and last year's winners Vauxhall.

The Audi attacks a 65kg weight penalty because of its four-wheel-drive. In the past other teams, including Ford, have tried 4wd cars but that penalty has proved too great. Audi is convinced that it can be turned to its advantage.

When John Bintliffe, the team's British discovery, was asked to sit

in his touring car racer, he discovered it was a left-hand-drive model. As if learning to live with four-wheel-drive was not enough, he also had to learn the track from the other side of the car. It was one of the most difficult switches he faced after being recruited from the ranks of supporting saloon racers to partner World Cup holder Biela.

The left-hand-drive really means I've had to relearn all the circuits," he says. "The trouble is the weather's been so bad that I've had to run the road car on snow tyres most of the time."

He had been a member of the Audi team for some weeks before he got his first chance to sit in the new season's car at a test session at Vallelunga, Italy, in February. By then he had already been on a training week in St Moritz, meeting and skiing with other Audi drivers who will be taking part in the Italian and German championships, undergoing physical training and learning what the German company would expect from all of them in terms of application and dedication.

Super Touring is a big step up from the supporting races. For Bintliffe it meant the difference between being a self-financed one-man show to being part of a multinational professional team. "It is the first time I've really been able to think about what I am doing as a driver, without working on the car myself or worrying about whether the clutch will last round the track."

When he sat in the A4 for the first time, it was three or four months since he had last sat in a race car, the Fiesta in which he had won last year's Ford Fiesta Challenge. "It was bit like reading a book, but you



How John Bintliffe sees the Audi experience: "How do you start explaining the difference? You have to wait until it's too late before you really learn where to stop"

have to speed read. You take in the general gist, but not the detail. It seemed better to do a few laps at a time and then stop to think about it. "How do you start explaining the difference? It is just such a different car. The first thing I noticed when I rolled out of the pits was the big 'klunk' when I changed gear. The power shifting means you can keep your foot on the floor even in tight corners."

"The brakes are just unreal. Allied to engine braking on all four wheels it's amazing. You have to wait until it's too late before you really learn where to stop."

Whether that is what John was

doing when he took a spectacular roll during practice at Snetterton in Norfolk a month ago is a subject for speculation. He suffered no ill effects and the car was not as badly damaged as at first feared, although it did have to be shipped back to Germany for repair, cutting by even more his time to get familiar with it.

I was the sort of incident that might have caused tension in some teams, but Biela says: "I am very optimistic, but this is a completely new team. We've still got a long way to go, a lot of work to do. I don't know all the circuits

here. I know some, but I also know that others are more twisty and difficult. But that's why I came to England. I wanted a new challenge, and I knew we would face some big competition."

That competition is certain to be headed by the twin Vectras from the Vauxhall team. They are in formidable form, according to Vaughan Freeman, who spent two days with the team as it prepared at Spain's Jarama circuit.

Freeman took a ride with James Thompson, touring car series' youngest winner, and remembers vividly the terrifying detail: "The brakes of the racing Vectra faded at

100mph on a big right-hand curve. Now I was wondering whether that was supposed to happen. I figured it was not. Grim-faced, I wondered idly if James would mind pulling over and let me walk back to the pits. Thompson stuck out a gloved right-hand, his feet danced on the pedals while a busy left hand did everything else, including steer. Then he riddled a dashboard switch that boosted the brakes, seemed satisfied and we took off again. All in a day's work, brakes letting you down like that."

So how different is a touring car to a trip in an ordinary road-going version of the Vectra? A breathless

Freeman says: "The cars look smooth and fast when you watch on television or trackside. Actually, it is a pounding nightmare. All bare metal, hip-crushing seat and lung-squashing harness. The noise is appalling, despite earplugs, the heat sauna-like, and worst of all is the lurching, non-stop jarring."

"Basically, there is no comparison between what Cleland and Thompson will be going through over the next 26 races and what the ordinary Vectra driver would experience on a visit to the shops. Personally, I will settle for a comfy seat and the radio tuned to the afternoon play."

Your chance to get a close-up of the Audi A4

Win a VIP day at Brands Hatch



Audi A4: German challenger in a fascinating battle

THE RACING touring car is the ultimate wolf in sheep's clothing. The bodysell is unmistakable — but just how powerful these beasts can be seen by two of Car 96's readers, writes Kevin Eason.

Audi is offering to: VIP hospitality for the second round of the touring car series at Brands Hatch on April 21. Our readers will be given Audi sport and will also get Audi sport quartz watches, team jackets, stopwatch and lapel badge. Ten runner-up can win badges and T-shirts. The winners will be shown round Audi's team garage at Brands Hatch where they can note the significant differences between an ordinary Audi A4 and the racer.

An aerodynamic front air-splitter and a rear wing, plus the lower and tougher suspension, gives the Audi an aggressive look — never mind the impressive decals. Inside a bare cockpit, a massiveroll cage protects the driver. Audi's cars will carry a weight penalty to compensate for its four-wheel-drive, unlike the Ford Mondeo which uses a 300 brake horse power '6 to power the front wheels.

Supercharging or turbocharging is outlawed and revs limited to 8,500rpm. The Audi's four-cylinder, 2-litre produces 297bhp at 8,250rpm, compared to 140bhp at 5,600rpm for the road car, while the drivers crack through a semi-automatic sequential gearbox — pushing the lever backwards and forwards instead of through an H-gate. Cars must also meet strict noise limits and each has a catalytic converter and uses unleaded fuel, like any road-going Renault, Ford, Honda or Toyota.

Other safety measures include immensely strong Kevlar/carbon fibre racing seats, a double fire extinguisher system directed to the engine bay and cockpit, and six-point safety harnesses instead of seat belts.

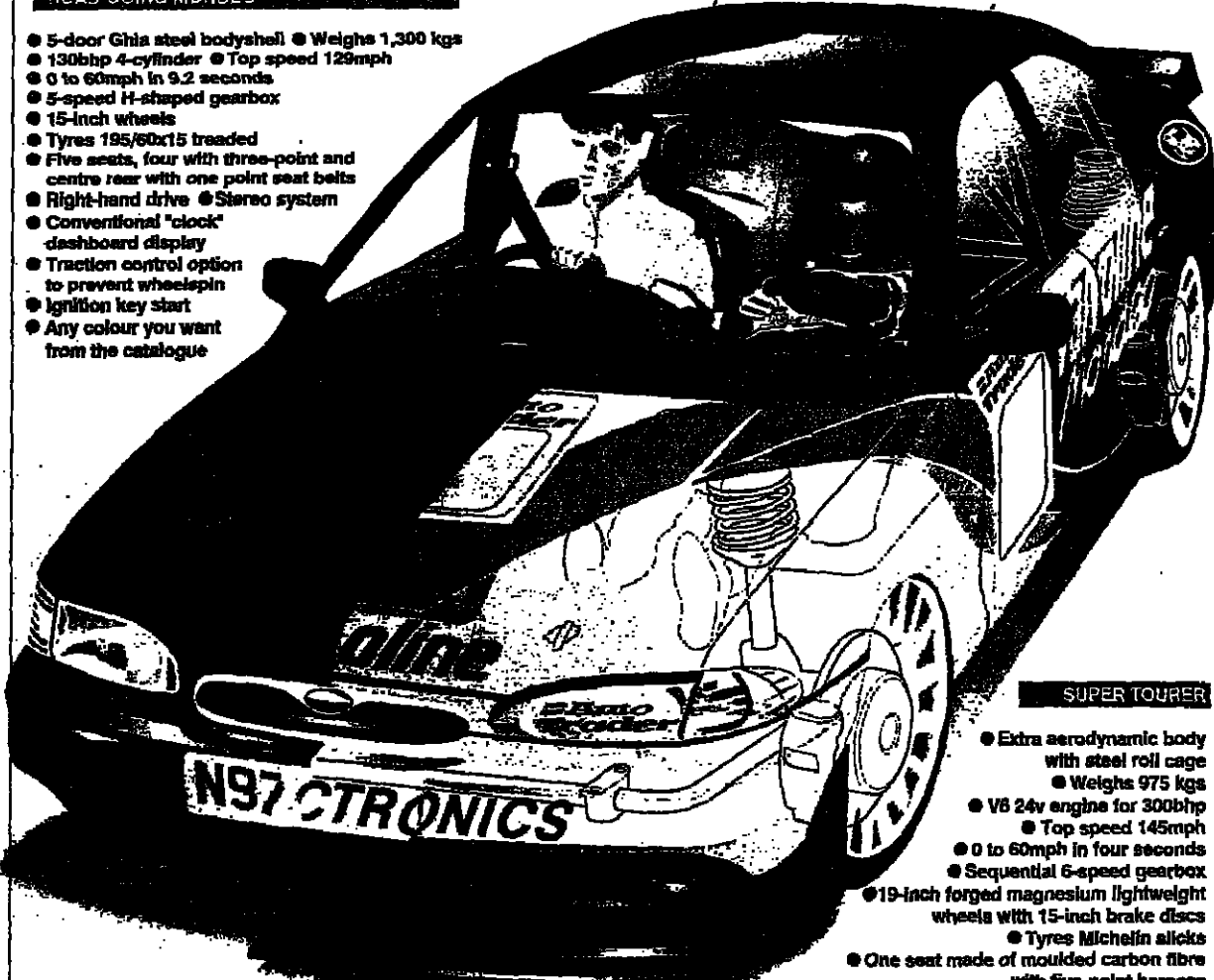
The battle between Audi's 4wd and the conventional front-wheel-drive on the Ford, Renault, Volvos and BMW promises to be fascinating. So, to see the real thing, answer the following three questions and send on a postcard to Audi Sport competition, Car 96, 1, Pennington Street, London EC1 9XN.

1 — Who is the current touring cars champion? 2 — Which is the most successful manufacturer in touring cars? 3 — Name the badge logo which has been applied to all four-wheel-drive Audi cars? Usual competition rules apply. Closing date April 14.

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DIARY

THE CARS are already revving up for the first rounds of the championship for 1996, with the first races at the Donington Park circuit south of Nottingham, this weekend. Each meeting has two races, the first at 12.30 and the second at around 3.30pm, except at the British Grand Prix, which is over the full race weekend. Check details of individual events as they might change throughout the year. Information can be obtained from the race tracks.

- Donington Park (01332-810048): April 7/8.
- Brands Hatch, Kent (01474-872331): April 20/21.
- Thruxton, Andover, Hampshire (01284-773794): May 4-6.
- Silverstone, Northants (01327-857271): May 26/27.
- Oulton Park, Cheshire (01829-780301): May 26/27.
- Snetterton, Norfolk (01953-888220): June 29/30.
- Brands Hatch: July 12-14.
- Silverstone: July 12-14.
- Knockhill, Dumfries, Scotland (01383-723337): July 26-28.
- Oulton Park: August 10/11.
- Thruxton: August 24-26.
- Donington Park: September 7/8.
- Brands Hatch: September 21/22.

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Benz in the U.K.

1987	17,000	1988	17,000	1989	17,000	1990	17,000	1991	17,000	1992	17,000	1993	17,000	1994	17,000	1995	17,000	1996	17,000	1997	17,000	1998	17,000	1999	17,000	2000	17,000	2001	17,000	2002	17,000	2003	17,000	2004	17,000	2005	17,000	2006	17,000	2007	17,000	2008	17,000	2009	17,000	2010	17,000	2011	17,000	2012	17,000	2013	17,000	2014	17,000	2015	17,000	2016	17,000	2017	17,000	2018	17,000	2019	17,000	2020	17,000	2021	17,000	2022	17,000	2023	17,000	2024	17,000	2025	17,000	2026	17,000	2027	17,000	2028	17,000	2029	17,000	2030	17,000	2031	17,000	2032	17,000	2033	17,000	2034	17,000	2035	17,000	2036	17,000	2037	17,000	2038	17,000	2039	17,000	2040	17,000	2041	17,000	2042	17,000	2043	17,000	2044	17,000	2045	17,000	2046	17,000	2047	17,000	2048	17,000	2049	17,000	2050	17,000	2051	17,000	2052	17,000	2053	17,000	2054	17,000	2055	17,000	2056	17,000	2057	17,000	2058	17,000	2059	17,000	2060	17,000	2061	17,000	2062	17,000	2063	17,000	2064	17,000	2065	17,000	2066	17,000	2067	17,000	2068	17,000	2069	17,000	2070	17,000	2071	17,000	2072	17,000	2073	17,000	2074	17,000	2075	17,000	2076	17,000	2077	17,000	2078	17,000	2079	17,000	2080	17,000	2081	17,000	2082	17,000	2083	17,000	2084	17,000	2085	17,000	2086	17,000	2087	17,000	2088	17,000	2089	17,000	2090	17,000	2091	17,000	2092	17,000	2093	17,000	2094	17,000	2095	17,000	2096	17,000	2097	17,000	2098	17,000	2099	17,000	2100	17,000	2101	17,000	2102	17,000	2103	17,000	2104	17,000	2105	17,000	2106	17,000	2107	17,000	2108	17,000	2109	17,000	2110	17,000	2111	17,000	2112	17,000	2113	17,000	2114	17,000	2115	17,000	2116	17,000	2117	17,000	2118	17,000	2119	17,000	2120	17,000	2121	17,000	2122	17,000	2123	17,000	2124	17,000	2125	17,000	2126	17,000	2127	17,000	2128	17,000	2129	17,000	2130	17,000	2131	17,000	2132	17,000	2133	17,000	2134	17,000	2135	17,000	2136	17,000	2137	17,000	2138	17,000	2139	17,000	2140	17,000	2141	17,000	2142	17,000	2143	17,000	2144	17,000	2145	17,000	2146	17,000	2147	17,000	2148	17,000	2149	17,000	2150	17,000	2151	17,000	2152	17,000	2153	17,000	2154	17,000	2155	17,000	2156	17,000	2157	17,000	2158	17,000	2159	17,000	2160	17,000	2161	17,000	2162	17,000	2163	17,000	2164	17,000	2165	17,000	2166	17,000	2167	17,000	2168	17,00
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<p>1990 Coupe Auto 94L, Nautic Blue/ Green, White, Navy Extra. 29,000 Miles. F34. C88,998. Lancaster Leased. 01709 861321/0809 104904.</p>	<p>1990 CE 35 (F/L) Lotus, blue hatch, auto, A/C, genuine 33,000 miles. F34. 2 owners, immaculate. £17,950 Tel 01828 872541.</p>	<p>all shandlers worldwide! For the best service and rates. Karmann Shavettes. Tel: 01526 801348. Fax: 01526 802996</p>	<p>1986 2.0 Auto "93AL" Black Int. ABS, alloy, v/r/w windows, front air, 17mmac cond. £13,995. Tel 01920 613996. Profile Executive cars.</p>	<p>Grey or blue leather/blue/mushroom leather, 1 owner, air conditioning, 4 hole alloy wheels, rear seats, FMRSI, CD. £46,500 Tel: 01992 462131</p>
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is that happening

VW leads the charge to drop hidden charges

Rupert Saunders

Lord Montagu of Beaulieu recalls the dramatic Thousand Miles Trial of 1900, in which one driver had to steer with his boot on the front wheel

An epic of endurance that made the car go

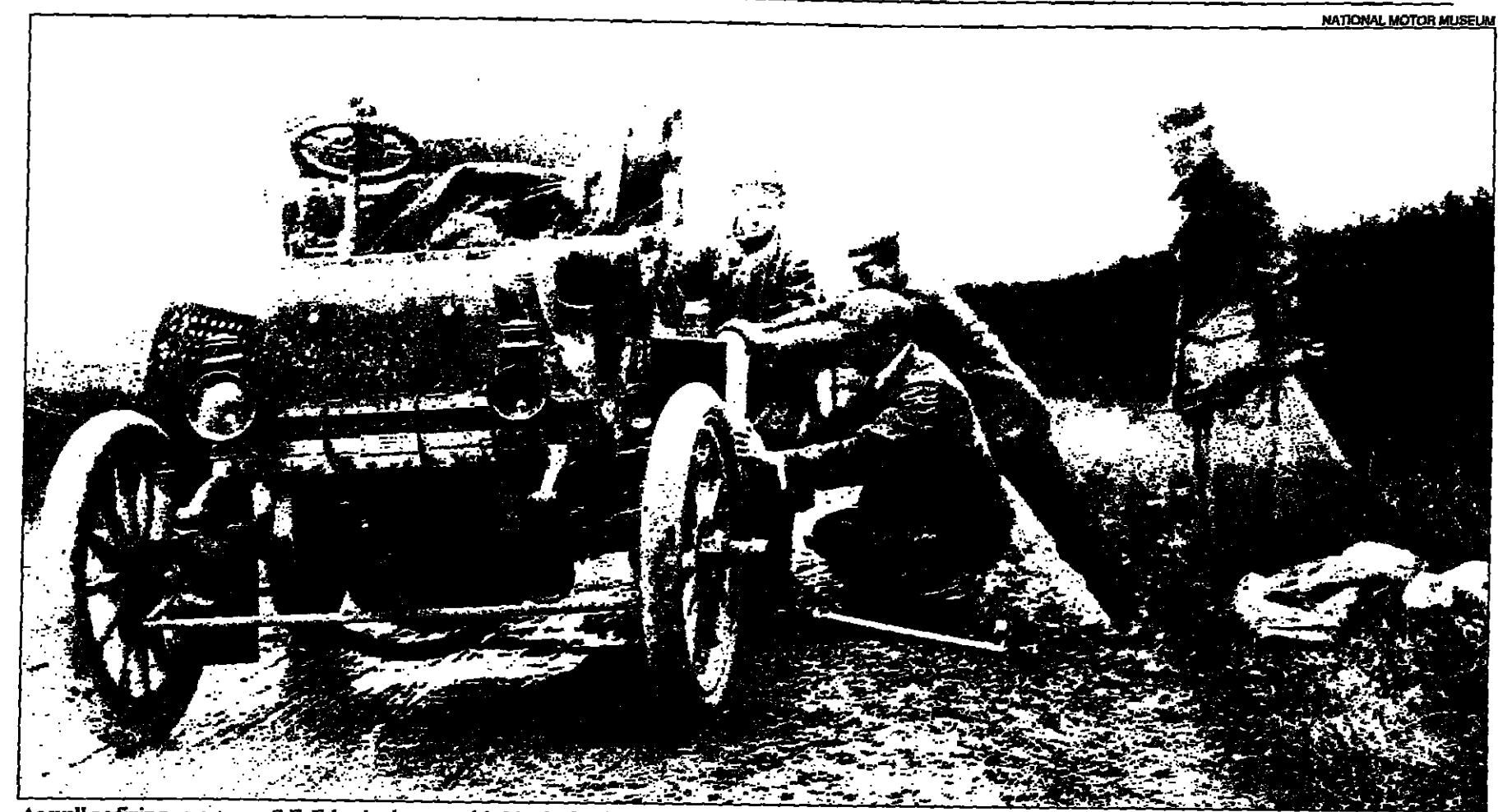
By the beginning of 1900, probably fewer than one in a hundred British people had seen a motor car. Two years earlier my father had estimated the total number of motor vehicles, including bicycles and tricycles, in Britain to be about 650, and numbers had not greatly increased since then.

But April 1900 saw an event which took the motor car the length and breadth of the land, giving countless people their first sight of the new invention: the motive behind the Thousand Miles Trial was to test cars to the limit and to raise funds for the Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland. The club, founded in 1897 and to receive royal approval as the RAC in 1907, was in poor financial shape, having lost £1,600 on an exhibition in Richmond Park in June 1899.

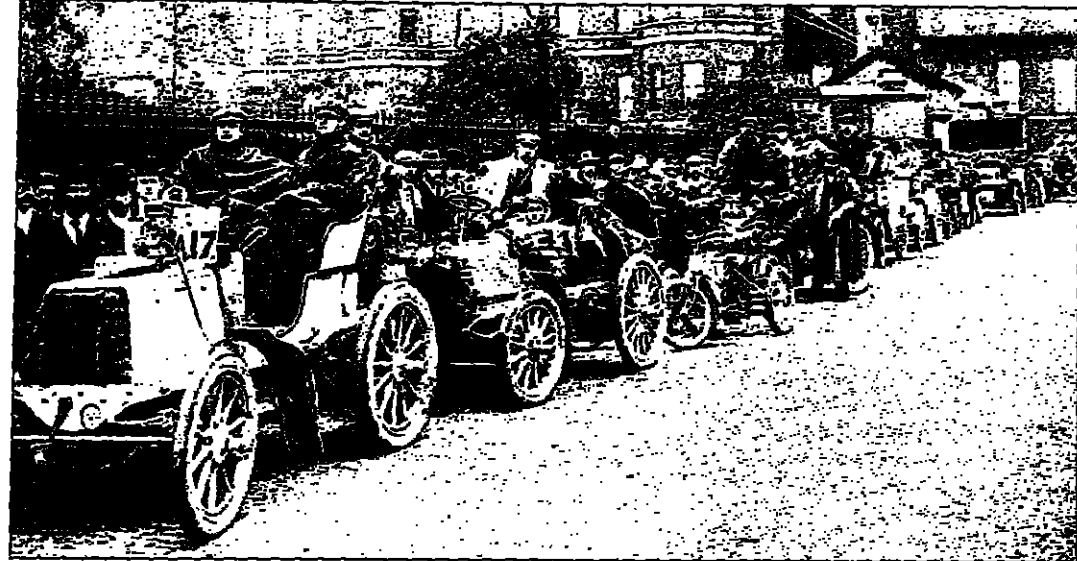
The idea of the Trial was that of the club's secretary, Claude Johnson, later to win fame as the guiding star in the partnership between Rolls and Royce. He obtained financial backing from his friend, newspaper owner Alfred Harmsworth (later Lord Northcliffe), who guaranteed the club against any losses from the Trial, putting up £452 in prize money and providing breakfast for all competitors at his country estate, Calcut Park near Reading.

Sixty-five cars and tricycles were entered, of which 33 were of British manufacture. Many of these, however, were not of native design. Daimlers, of which 14 were entered, were descendants of the French Panhard-based designs of 1896, as were the similar MMCs which came from another part of the same Coventry factory. The Napier was a modified Panhard,

Several cars had to shed their passengers



As well as fixing punctures, S.F. Edge had to steer his Napier backwards until the road levelled when he missed a gearchange; his passengers had leapt out to safety



Some of the 65 entrants that left Hyde Park Corner; nearly half of them failed to last the course

shed their passengers. "Much pedestrianism on the part of the passengers was necessitated," said Nixon. About 15 cars had fallen out by the time Edinburgh was reached, and the return to London took a toll of a further 15, so that only 35 made it back to the capital.

The problems besetting the drivers were numerous, and represented most of the hills which troubled motorists at the turn of the century. Punctures were very common and afflicted almost all the competitors; other frequent problems included broken valves, pistons, springs and wheels, as well as belts or chains in the final drive breaking or slipping. Shaft drive was almost unknown in 1900, with the notable exception of the Renault. A more unusual breakage was suffered by the driver of an International-Benz. The Autocar reported that no parts were replaced, but there was a delay between Newcastle and Leeds caused by Mr Capellan breaking a blood vessel.

Poor Herbert Austin, on a single-cylinder Wolseley which was his own design, suffered countless problems, including at least six punctures, broken wire to the choking valve, detached belt fastening and a broken rear

spring. Nevertheless he completed the course, and took second prize in his class. My father suffered several punctures and also delay from weak lamps. His passengers had to dismount on Bunby Hill, near Nottingham, but he still received a Bronze Medal.

Brakes were a problem in that very few would hold the car if it was running backwards, hence the sprag, a metal rod that could be dropped into the road to arrest reverse progress. It had to be done quickly, for if any speed were reached the car would "jump the sprag", either breaking it or riding up on it, which could cause a top-heavy machine to overturn. Sprags did not seem to be in evidence on the Trial; when J.R. Hargreaves's 8hp Daimler Mail Phaeton began to run backwards, he was forced to steer into a wall. S.F. Edge also began to run backwards when he missed a gearchange. His passenger, Edward Kernard, pushed young Nixon out on to the road then jumped himself, while Edge remained at the wheel and managed to steer the car backwards until the road levelled out again.

Like all early drivers, the Trial contestants needed ample amounts of perseverance, courage and ingenuity. Montagu Grahame-White's Daimler ran into a ditch, breaking a bracket supporting the starting gear. The situation looked hopeless, but Grahame-White found that, by standing on the step, he could reach the nave of one of the front wheels with his boot. By this means he managed to steer the car for 52 miles into Newcastle, finding on arrival that the sole of his heavy boot was completely worn through.

At the end of the nine-day, 982-mile Trial, the Gold Medal for the vehicle which, in the opinion of the judges, was the most meritorious, irrespective of class, went to the 12hp Panhard owned and driven by the Hon C.S. Rolls. In addition there were ten silver medals and four bronze, as well as various cups and medals, including one from the Automobile Club de France.

The Trial proved that cars were capable of covering long distances and severe hills, as well as demonstrating to thousands who had never seen one before. The fact that no serious accidents occurred helped to reassure the public that cars were not the lethal juggernauts that their opponents branded them. All in all, the Trial turned out to be a superb public relations exercise for the newly emerging British motor industry.

Out of Africa comes the ultimate rally challenge



Back for the first time since 1987, Ford and its Escort Cosworths face tough opposition

TIME WAS when the Safari Rally was one of the world's best-known motor sport events. Traditionally held over the Easter weekend, across more than 3,000 miles of Kenyan bush and scrubland, it had a fearsome reputation as the ultimate rallying challenge.

This year, as the second round of the 1996 World Rally Championship, it has taken on a significance it has not held in more than a decade. Ford is back, for the first time since 1987, and faces tough opposition from Subaru with reigning World Champion Colin McRae, and Mitsubishi with hotshot Finnish driver Tommi Makinen.

Toyota, banned last year for cheating, is remarkably back among the pack. The com-

Rupert Saunders on Kenya's big one

pany seems to have skirted around the ban by having its local agents enter a team... so the familiar Celicas will no doubt be among the leaders again. Toyota has won the event for the last four years in a row.

The stakes are high. The east African car market, once dominated by Peugeot and Ford, is now almost entirely Japanese. Successes on the Safari Rally by first Nissan and now Toyota, have proved that their cars are built to last. But the huge costs involved in running a competitive team have long dissuaded other manufacturers from taking

the event seriously. Now changes to the championship regulations mean every team has to contest every round or face a punitive fine.

At the heart of Ford's world championship programme is the Escort Cosworth. The team will use nine cars during the year, and with each one valued at around £150,000 the investment in machinery is considerable — even before spare parts and service vans for each event are considered.

For the Safari Rally, Ford is relying on veteran Swedish driver, Stig Blomqvist, and the twice former World Champion, Carlos Sainz. The tactics are for Sainz to go for speed and Blomqvist to hold back, making sure he has a good enough position to score championship points.

ENTRY FORM

ABOUT YOUR COMPANY...

Company name: _____

Address: _____

Post code: _____

Tel number: _____ Fax number: _____

Nature of business: _____

Number of employees: _____ Number of company cars: _____

Entrant: _____ Position: _____

NOMINATED DRIVERS...

Surname	Forename	Job title	Age	Points on licence (max 20)
1				
2				
3				
(reserve)				

Please select your first and second choice location/date of regional heat (indicate 1 or 2 in box):

Maidstone, Kent	Friday, 3 May	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oxford	Friday, 10 May	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wigan, Lancs	Friday, 17 May	<input type="checkbox"/>	Elstree, Herts	Friday, 24 May	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stourport, Hereford	Friday, 31 May	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leicester	Friday, 7 June	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please ensure that entrant and nominated drivers are available for both first and second choice dates and for Silverstone on Friday, 21 June. Initial qualification may be by telephone questionnaire. Entrants and drivers will be contacted on an individual basis.

Once you have completed this entry form
fax to Lease Plan on 01753 620676

Competition rules

The closing date for entries is 17 April 1996. Drivers must be 24 years of age or over. Maximum number of endorsements on any competitor's driving licence is three points. Drivers must bring their current driving licence to their regional heat for confirmation of the above. Drivers must be nominated by the director or senior manager responsible for the company car fleet. Drivers must be nominated in groups of three. Companies can only enter one team to compete. The entrant may nominate himself as part of the team. Competitors must drive a company car or vehicle as part of their employment or remuneration package. Qualification for the regional heats will be by telephone questionnaire. In the event of a tie, the entrant's regional heat will be decided by a random draw. The entrant's regional heat will be decided by a random draw. The entrant's regional heat will be decided by a random draw.

Can you match the Services?



DRIVERS entering our competition will be able to test themselves against the best because the Armed Forces and emergency services have accepted an invitation to take part in the heats, writes Tony Dawe.

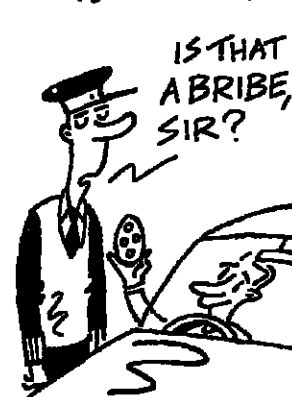
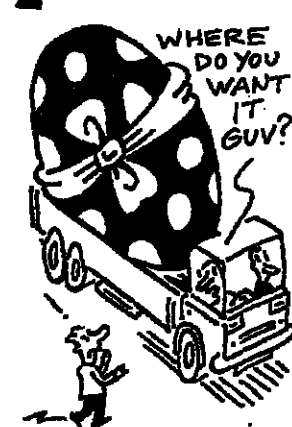
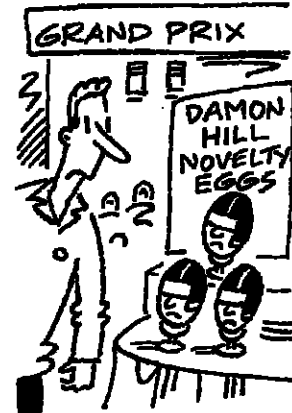
Teams of three drivers from the Army, Navy, police, fire and ambulance services will compete for a separate trophy, but their presence will give the amateur drivers something to judge themselves by.

The purpose of the competition is to encourage companies to take a more professional approach to the employees who drive their cars," says Rod Harman, of Lease Plan. "We thought it a useful exercise, therefore, to benchmark the average company car driver against professional drivers who have received special training for their jobs."

COMPANIES are being invited to enter teams of three for the six regional heats, where they will face written questions before taking the wheel of a new Nissan Almera 1.6. The best will go to the final at Silverstone for a series of high-speed challenges, with the winner earning a touring holiday for two in Europe in a car provided by Lease Plan.

A different professional team will take part in each heat, with the Kent police joining the first one at Maidstone, and the team with the most points will be invited to receive its trophy at the dinner following the final.

CAR TOONS



Halldane

Sir Denis Thatcher's first car was an Austin 7 costing £5 — that's £1 for each wheel and £1 for the spare. He talks to Andrew Pierce

Naturally, Margaret drove very well

The quiet enigma who spent years at the side of the most powerful woman in Britain had a secret she made him sell his Rolls-Royce when they moved into Number 10 and drive a Ford.

Having avoided the media for years, Sir Denis Thatcher, one of the world's best known consorts, has finally succumbed, agreeing to let his daughter, Carol, write his biography, *Below the Parapet*. It is a fascinating insight into life behind the scenes at Downing Street during the Thatcher years and the way Lady Thatcher juggled the conflicting demands of motherhood and a very demanding career.

But Sir Denis also agreed to talk to *Car 96* about his enjoyment of driving — even though his memory is woolly now on the exact kinds of cars he once enjoyed, particularly slightly "downmarket" models which could not compare with the love of his motoring life, his Rolls-Royce. The self-made millionaire discloses a passion for his Rolls-Royce and laments its passing.

The somewhat retiring Sir Denis, now 80, will be a reluctant guest at his daughter's book launch party next week — and presumably she will have to give him a lift now he is without his own transport.

The launch party will, however, have its consolation. Sir Denis will be fortified by unlimited supplies of his favourite gin and tonic. Carol has secured, after an initial hiccup, free Gordons Gin for the party in honour of the fact that her octogenarian father has been such a high profile mascot for the company. "And at least I won't have to drive home," Sir Denis commented.

How did you first learn to drive?

In a field. It must have been more than 65 years ago when I was 14. I learnt with a lad who was about my age. I can't tell you what sort of

STEERING COLUMN

vehicle it was. Dad had left some clapped-out old car in a field. We started it, eventually, and turned it round and round.

What was your first car?

An Austin Seven that cost £5. I always said: "A pound for each wheel and one pound for the spare." I cannot really say it was a love affair. The brakes came on by a thread of wire. It was a public menace that should never have been allowed on the road.

What car do you drive now, and why?

Well, it was a Rolls-Royce. It was my second one, but I had to give up driving because of failing eyesight. I had a runaround station wagon Ford when we were at Number 10. It lasted the whole time we were there. Marvellous thing. I never opened the bonnet and never ever knew which side the oil went in. But there was nothing to beat the Rolls. Much better than BMWs and all these yuppie cars.

Do you like driving?

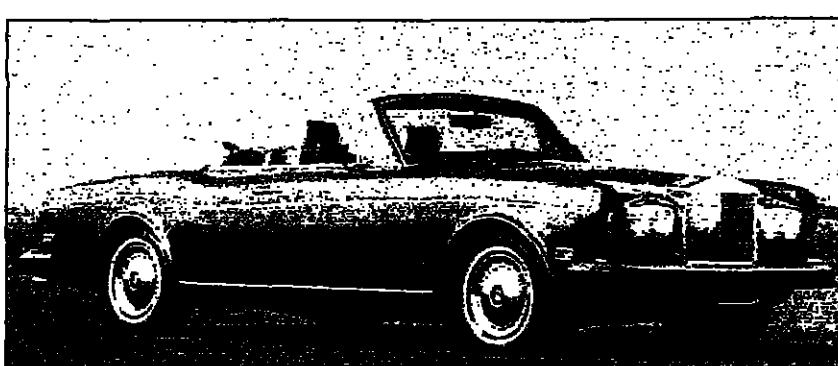
I love it. Never minded the traffic. It's what you have to expect. Margaret used to drive, but it was a long time ago when she was first an MP. Naturally, she drove very well. That goes without saying. Regrettably, I have had to stop because my eyesight is not up to it now: old age. Just like everyone else, I had been filling my licence application and getting the all-clear. No one had ever told me to have an eye test; then I did.

What is your most hated car?

When you get a rogue. We've all had one, no matter how many years you



A pedestrian life: "I had been filling my licence application and getting the all-clear. No one ever told me to have an eye test; then I did."



A dream Rolls-Royce Corniche — "But I don't know how many people could afford it" — and Sir Denis promoting Birmingham's Super Prix



have stuck faithfully to the same model or make. You can suddenly find you have got a rogue. There is nothing which makes one more bad tempered than when you switch on and it will not start.

What is your dream car?

A Rolls-Royce drophead Corniche. The only thing is, I don't know many people who can afford it.

What is your worst habit in the car?

Dreamy driving, especially on motorways, which can be such a bore. It is so easy when you are in the Rolls. It puts away and you are off in another world of your own.

What infuriates you most about other drivers?

Their driving. Every driver on the road is bloody awful — except me.

What is the most unusual thing you have done in your car?

I turned a car over. I was dreaming away, driving a little bit too fast, going into a corner on a road which I did not see coming. I turned it too quickly, slid gently into the ditch... and it turned over. It must have been more than 20 years ago. I was not hurt, but I was cross with myself. I clambered out, cursing my luck, found the nearest telephone box and rang the AA.

Have you ever had points on your licence?

No.

What do you listen to in the car?

Not much if I can help it. It's such a distraction. And when you are a dreamy driver, it's an open invitation to hit something or slide off the road or go to sleep.

If you were Secretary of State for Transport, what is the first thing you would do?

Reduce on-street parking — better still, eliminate it altogether. Just drive through London to see for

yourself the problems that it causes. It reduces a three-lane traffic road into two or even one. No wonder there is so much congestion. I can see the problems it causes looking out of the window here at Beauchamp Place. Vehicles are parked on both sides of the road. It should simply be stopped.

What is your favourite car advertisement?

I never notice them. But the one I used to like was for the Rolls-Royce. It was a long time ago and featured a pair of leather gloves on a silver tray. All it had on the tag was R-R. It was a bit snobby and up-market, but I loved it.

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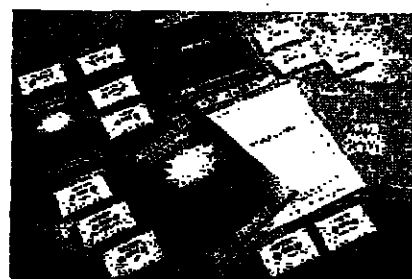
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Education News says, "It's radically different — there are so many features about it that recommend it to the learner." The Bankers Institute of New Zealand says, "Accelerated Learning is the new competitive weapon."

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